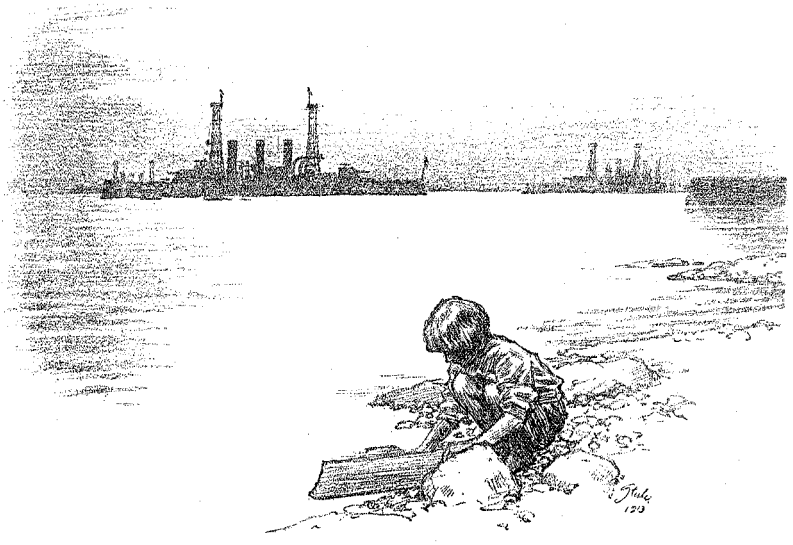
SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE

VOL. LIV AUGUST, 1913 NO. 2



SONNIE-BOY'S PEOPLE

By James B. Connolly

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FREDERIC DORR STEELE

THE man with the gold-headed cane had been headed for the cottage, but espying the boy he changed his course. He crept to within a few paces of the lad before he hailed: "Hello, little boy! I'll bet I know who your papa is."

The boy looked casually around. Seeing that it was a stranger, he faced about and stood respectfully erect.

"Mr. Welkie's little boy, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir. But I'm 'most five."

"Oh-h, I see—a big boy now. But what have you got there?"

The boy held it up.

"Oh-h, a steam-ship! What are you going to do with it?"

The boy looked sidewise out to where in the bay a fleet of battle-ships were lying to anchor.

"Load it with sugar and pineapples and ship 'em to the States, are you?"

"But it's a gun-ship. See—where the turrets 'n' the fighting-tops will be when papa makes them."

"Oh! and so you don't want to be a great merchant?"

"I want to be a fighter on a big gun-ship."

"Well, if ever you do, little man, I'll bet you'll be a game one, too. Is your papa home?"

"No, sir, but Aunt Marie is."

Copyright, 1913, by Charles Scribner's Sons. All rights reserved.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"And is Aunt Marie busy, do you think?"

"I don't know, sir, but she's making a battle-flag for my gun-ship."

"That so? I think I will call on Aunt Marie, then."

Swinging his cane and advancing leisurely, the stranger headed for the screened veranda door.

Marie Welkie, because of having to keep an eye on her nephew from the veranda, could not avoid noticing the stranger. The clothing, the jewelry, the air of assurance had disturbed and half-amused her; but the kindly tone with the boy, the parting pat of his head, were more pleasing. She answered his knock herself.

"Good-evening—Miss Welkie?" That Southern "good-evening" in the middle of the afternoon likewise pleased her.

"Miss Welkie, yes."

"I'm Mr. Necker." From a gold-mounted case he drew out a card. "I'm looking for your brother."

"He won't be home for some time yet. But won't you step in, Mr. Necker, from out of the sun?"

"Thank you. It is warm, isn't it? Warmer than ordinary?"

"No, I shouldn't say so. It's usually hot here."

"Then it must be hot here when it is hot. It wasn't so bad out in the Gulf. I just got in—from Key West. Not many passengers come here, Miss Welkie?"

"Only somebody especially interested in the works, usually from Washington. Do you mind if I go ahead with this ensign for my nephew, Mr. Necker?" She held up a partly finished American ensign. Above the top of it the visitor could see part of the very white forehead and a front of dark straight hair. "I promised to have it ready for him surely by morning, and after my brother gets home there probably won't be much spare time. But were you the only passenger for here, Mr. Necker?"

"There was one other. He got off at the new fortification landing. Twenty-nine or thirty perhaps he was—a well-made, easy-moving kind." His voice was casual, but his gaze was keen enough. It never left her face. "A tall man came running down to meet him," he resumed.

"They seemed terribly glad to see each other."

"That must have been my brother to meet—Mr. Balfe, was it?—your fellow-passenger."

He hesitated a moment. "Mr. Balfe—yes, that was it. The captain—or was it the captain?—said that there was a Mr. Balfe who went on special missions for the government, but whether this was the Mr. Balfe or not he could not say."

She sewed serenely on. "I've heard that that steamer captain is developing into a great gossiper. Our Mr. Balfe is my brother's dearest friend and godfather to my brother's boy—the boy you were speaking to on the beach—and if he ever found himself in this part of the world without calling on us, I don't know what my brother would think."

This time Miss Welkie looked up, and Necker smiled with her. Also he peered smilingly through the veranda vine. "So that is your brother's boy out there? Well, well! And a fine boy, too. A beautifully shaped head. Bright, I'll bet!"

"Naturally"—with a tender smile—"we think so."

"I'll bet he is. And of course your brother is laying great plans to assure his future?"

"I'm afraid you are not well acquainted with my brother, Mr. Necker."

"Not personally, Miss Welkie, but surely he won't neglect his own child's future?"

"I'm afraid that would not be his way of looking at it."

"And his way is a fine way, no doubt, Miss Welkie—if a man had only himself to think of. But can, or should, his family——"

"His family? Young Greg and I are his family, Mr. Necker, and I'm sure we're not worrying about the future." Her head bent lower to her sewing, but not too low for Necker to see the little smile, half of humor, half of something else, hovering on her lips.

"Because you're too young—and too unselfish."

This time her head came up and the smile developed into a soft laugh. "No, no, nothing quite so fine as that, nor quite so awfully young. At twenty-three——"

Necker tried to meet her eyes; but the eyes were not for him, nor for the boy on

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the beach this time, nor for the brave warships at anchor. Her eyes were for something farther away. Necker, twisting in his chair, could distinguish through the Miss Welkie. It is because I am a friend and an admirer of his that I'm here."

"But you will return later?"

"I will, thank you. After he's had time

"And of course your brother is laying great plans to assure his future?"—Page 146.

haze the fortification walls on the other side of the little bay.

There was another little smile hovering. Necker waited hopefully. She, catching his eye, flushed and returned to her sewing. "We're all very happy here," she added after a moment, and, still flushing, resumed her needle.

Presently he pointed his cane at the boy on the beach. "A great deal of your brother in him, isn't there?"

"Very much. Our older friends back home say that it is like Greg—that is my brother—being born all over."

"A fine boy, yes, Miss Welkie, and ought to be a great man some day. But I'll be running along now, Miss Welkie."

"You won't wait for him? He will be glad to see you, I know."

"Thank you; but after a man's been out there under that sun all day is no time for a friend to bother him. And I am a friend of your brother's, believe me, to clean up and eat and smoke, and a chat with his friend, I'll drop in for a little talk, and in that little talk, Miss Welkie, I hope you won't be against me, for I mean it for his best. So until eight o'clock to-night, Miss Welkie—*adios*." Necker, swishing his gold-headed cane, strolled leisurely away.

"I wonder what he wants of Greg," murmured Marie Welkie. And until his pea-green suit was lost to sight she speculated on his probable errand.

By and by her eyes, now less speculative, detected the smudge against the concrete walls across the bay. She took down a pair of glasses from the wall. It *was* the tow-boat leaving the wharf. Thereafter the glasses took the place of her sewing; and they were still to her eyes when a sharp "Auntie!" came to her ears. "'Tention, auntie! Colors!" warned the voice. Lowering the glasses, Marie came obediently to attention.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The sun was cutting the edge of the sea. The last level light lay on the long, slow, swelling waters like a rolling, flaming carpet, and in that flaming path the gray warships bobbed to anchor; and on the quarter-deck of every ship a red-coated band was drawn up, and from the jack-staff of every ship an American ensign was slowly dropping down. The boy stood with his back to her, but Marie knew how his heart was thumping, and she knew the light that would be on his face.

"O say! can you see—" came the bursting notes over the gently heaving bay. Marie could feel that young Greg was ready to burst; but she could not detect a move, not a quiver, out of him until the last note of the last bugle had ceased to re-echo. Then he saluted reverently, executed an about-face and called out excitedly, "Auntie, auntie, there's papa now! Look!"

Marie pretended to see for the first time the tow-boat which, a hundred yards or so down the beach, was making a landing. "Sure enough, Greg!"

"And somebody else!"

"No, is there?"

"Why, don't you see—godfather, auntie! O papa! Godfather!" He was off.

When he returned he was clinging on the one hand to a tall, brown, lean-cheeked and rather slender man of thirty-four or five, in dusty corduroy coat and trousers, mud-caked shoes and leggings, khaki shirt and a hard-looking, low-blocked Panama hat; and on the other hand to a man also sun-tanned, but less tall and not so lean—a muscular, active man who may have lived the thirty years which Necker ascribed to him, but who surely did not look it now. At sight of Marie Welkie stepping down from the screened veranda he bounded like sixteen years across the beach. "Marie Welkie—at last!"

"Andie Balfe!" She took his hands within hers and drew them up in front of her bosom. The smile which Necker had so wanted to see again was there now, and now not to vanish in a moment. Balfe brushed her finger-tips with his lips.

"How far this time, Andie?"

"From half the world around, Marie."

"And are you glad?"

"And I would come it twice again to see your dear eyes smile."

"Could eyes be made so dull as not to light to your poetic touch, Andie?" And then, in a low voice, "Wait for the sunset." She stood upon her toes for her brother's kiss. "Another hard, hot day, Greg?"

"No, no, a fine day, Marie. Pedro"—he motioned to the negro at their rear—"put Mr. Balfe's suit-case in the corner of the veranda there. That'll be all to-night, except to see that Mr. Balfe's trunks come up from the tow-boat."

He paused on the veranda steps to get a view of the bay. As he stood there in silence, the lively notes of a dozen buglers came sharply to them. He still held the boy's hand.

"Mess call, papa?"

"Getting so you know them all, aren't you, Sonnie-Boy? One minute from now ten thousand husky lads out there will be doing awful things to the commissary grub. But look there! Andie, did any of your kings or presidents ever offer you sights more gorgeous than that to view from their palace walls?"

It was the afterglow of the sunset, a red-and-orange glory fading into the blue-black velvet of a Caribbean twilight.

"It's by way of greeting to the far traveller. This may be the last place on earth here, Andie, but we warrant our sunsets to be the best on the market. But let's go inside and make ready to eat. What do you say, Sonnie-Boy?"

"But, papa, you said that when godfather came you would have the Little Men sing you a song for the steam-engine he sent me from Japan!"

"That's right, I did. But where is it?"

"Right here, papa. Look! 'Lightning' I've named it."

"A fine name for it, too. Well, let me see. How was it? Oh, yes! Lunch-time to-day it was, and your papa was smoking his cigar and looking out to sea all by himself. It was very quiet, with all the donkey-engines stopped and the men eating inside the walls. On the bluff beyond the fort I was sitting, with my feet hanging over the edge, and the mango-tree I've told you so often about was shading me from the sun. The wind was blowing just a wee mite, and every time the wind would blow and the tree would wave a mango

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would drop into the bay. Plump! it would go into the ocean below, and every time a mango dropped down a Little Man in a green coat popped up."

"All wet, papa?"

"Shiny wet, Sonnie-Boy, and blowing their cheeks out like blub-blubs."

"What's blub-blubs, papa?"

"A blub-blub is a fat little fish who takes big long gulps deep down in the ocean and then comes to the top o' the water, and, when he sees anybody watching him, puffs out his cheeks and goes—blub-blub! like that."

"Like men sometimes, papa?"

"Just like. Well, by 'n' by there were twelve o' the Little Men in green coats, and they sat under the mango-tree all in a row and looked at me, and the one at the head o' the row puts up one finger, with his head to one side and his little round eye rolling out at me, and he says: 'Did Sonnie-Boy's godfather send him that steam-engine from Japan yet, what you told us about? 'Cause if he did, we have a fine pome about it.'

"'Yes, he did send him a fine steam-engine from Japan,' I said, 'and you go on and let me hear your pome, and if it's a good pome I'll give you all a fine ripe mango to eat.' And so they all puffs out their fat little cheeks and they begins:

"'Godfather bought him an engine red and black;
It wobbles slightly and the wheels don't track——'"

"But it don't, papa, 'n' the wheels do track."

"But that's what they said.

"'But Sonnie-Boy felt prouder than England's queen
When it puffed real smoke and sure-enough steam.'"

"But it's a king in England, papa."

"I know, but that's the way the little green men told me. Some things they don't know yet, they're so little.

"'He named it Lightning 'cause of its speed,
And the 'casional spills he did not heed.
All big roads had accidents, people knew,
There was danger when the whistle blew.'"

"It's true 'bout th' accidents, isn't it, papa?"

"Nothing truer. Now let me see. What else? Oh, yes:

"'The Lightning Express is coming back;
Clear the way there, people, off the track!
Or Sonnie-Boy's engine red and black
Will knock you down and hit you whack!'

How's that?"

"That's great, papa. And did they have a band with them?"

"No. No band, but one little six-toed fellow—I 'most forgot him—was playing on a hook-a-zoo. That's a sausage-shaped thing, with things like rabbit's ears on it. The music comes out of the ears."

"And what kind of music, papa?"

"Oh, like a jews-harp something, only being bigger 'twas louder. Zoo-zoo, zoo-zoo-zoo it went."

"I like those little green men, papa, but where was the little blue men to-day, did they say?"

"Oh, they'd gone to a wedding, the hook-a-zoo player said."

"They know everything, don't they, papa?"

"M-m-most everything."

"And will the Little Men tell me things when I'm a big man, papa?"

"If they don't, I won't let them have any more mangoes."

"An' what the bugle men play 'n' what the flags say when they hoists them up in the air on the big gun-ships, papa?"

"If you're a good boy, they will. And now what d'y' say if we go in and you tell Diana your papa wants some hot water out the kettle. And while you're doing that and auntie and godfather are talking things over to themselves, I'll be laying out my razor and my soap 'n' things all ready to shave. There you are, there's the boy!"

It was after dinner on Welkie's veranda. The two friends had been smoking for some time in silence. Young Greg had just left with his aunt to go to bed. Balfe was thinking what a pity it was the boy's mother had not lived to see him now. He turned in his chair. "What would you do without him, Greg?"

Welkie understood what his friend had in mind. "It would be like the days having no sunrise. I'd be groping in the dark, and almost no reason for me to keep on

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

groping. Splashed in concrete and slaked in lime, from head to toe steaming under that eternal sun, five hundred spiggities and not half enough foremen to keep 'em jumping, I find myself saying to myself, 'What in God's name is the use?' and then I'll see a picture of his shining face running to meet me on the beach, and, Andie, it's like the trade-wind setting in afresh. The men look around to see what I'm whistling about. But"—Welkie sniffed and stood up—"get it?"

Balfe caught a faint breath, the faintest tang borne up on the wings of the gentlest of breezes.

Welkie went inside. Presently he returned with bottles and glasses. "When a little breeze stirs, as it sometimes does of a hot night here, and there's beer in the ice-box and the ice not all melted, life's 'most worth living. Try some, Andie—from God's country. And one of these Porto Ric' cigars. Everybody'll be smoking 'em soon, and then we poor chaps 'll have to be paying New York prices for 'em, which means we'll have to make a new discovery somewhere."

"Wait, Greg—I almost forgot." Balfe stepped to his suit-case, took out a box of cigars, and handed it to Welkie. "From Key West. Hernando Cabada. When I told him I was going to see you, he sat down and rolled out that boxful, which took him three hours, and gave them to me for you. 'For my friend, Mis-ter Welkeey-ay,' he said."

"Good old Hernando!" Welkie opened the box. Balfe took one, Welkie took one; they lit up.

"Ah-h—" Welkie woofed a great gob of smoke toward the veranda roof. "Andie, you won't have to make any chemical analysis of the ashes of these cigars to prove they're good. There is an artist—Hernando—and more. I used to drop in to see him after a hot day. He would let me roll out a cigar for myself in one of his precious moulds, and we'd sit and talk of a heap of things. 'Some day, Hernando,' I'd say, 'along will come some people and offer you such a price for your name that I reckon you won't be able to resist.' 'No, no, my friend,' he would say. 'For my nam' there shall be only my cigar. I shall mak' the good, fine cigar—until I shall die. And for the sam'—one pr-r-ice.' How'd you come to run into him, Andie?"

"I'd heard about him and you. I suspected, too, that he could verify a few things about the construction company."

"But why the facts?"

"Oh-h— And so they have been after you again?"

Welkie nodded.

"And offering more money than ever?"

Welkie nodded.

They smoked on. Again Balfe half-turned in his chair. "I haven't seen you, Andie, since the President sent for you that time. How did you find him?"

"Fine. And I tell you, Andie, it heartened me to think that a man with all he's got to tend to would stop to spend an hour with an obscure engineer."

"You're not too obscure, Greg. What did he have to say?"

"Oh-h—said he wanted me to do a piece of special work, and he wanted me because several people, in whose judgment he had confidence, reckoned I was the man for the job. You were one of 'em, Andie, he told me, and I'm thanking you for it."

"I'm not sure that you ought to thank me, Greg. With that big company you would be wealthy in a few years, but the trouble is, Greg, when I'm on the job I'm as bad as you, only in a different and more selfish way. I know only one road then, and once I set out I'd brush aside anything for the one thing, Greg."

"Of course, when it's for the flag."

"Would you?"

"Could I do anything else?"

"The boy too?"

"Where would he come into it, Andie?"

"You don't think that your feeling for the lad and your work could ever clash?"

"How could they ever clash, Andie?"

"I don't know, Greg. I hope not." He relit his neglected cigar. "But what else did the President have to say?"

"He said it was a bit of emergency work he wanted me for, that only the remnant of a small appropriation was available for it, and that if I took it I would be pitiably paid; but that he wished me to do it, because some day, and that not too far away, it might have to stand the test not of friends but of enemies. Also he said—let me see——"

"That for foreign policy's sake it would

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have to be done quietly, without advertising, as a bit of departmental work?"

"That's it."

"And that you would get no great reputation out of it, that your very report would remain a supplementary paper buried in governmental files?"

"That was it."

"Did it strike you that the conditions were hard, Greg?"

"Not after he explained things. And so when the construction people said to me later, 'You're crazy, man! Look the two propositions in the eye!' I said, 'I've looked one of 'em at least in the eye and I'm passing the other up—and the other is yours.'"

"Lord, Greg! whether you're the best or the worst concrete man in the world is a small matter—you're a great man. And if some day—" Balfe let his front chair-legs come down bang and bounded to his feet.

"Greg"—it was Marie who had returned—"I don't know how I ever forgot, but I never thought till a moment ago—there was a Mr. Necker here to see you this evening."

"Well, you don't often forget, Marie. Must be the sight of those battle-ships. Necker? I don't know any Necker. You know him, Andie?"

"I was trying to guess coming over on the boat. I was still guessing when he got off. I could guess, Greg, who he is, but it would be only a guess."

"He didn't leave any message, Marie?"

"None, except to say that he would call again at eight. He seemed to know something of you and to be friendly."

"He must be a friendly soul to come to this place to see anybody. Well, when he comes we'll know. How'd you leave Sonnie-Boy?"

"He's waiting for you to say good-night."

"I'll go up to him." He went inside.

Marie picked up her ensign. Balfe placed a chair for her at the little work-table, and himself took the chair on the other side of the table.

"A great joy for you also—young Greg, Marie?"

"If you could hold him and feel his little heart against yours when he's saying 'Good-night, auntie,' after he's said his prayers! His prayers and the 'Star-Spangled Banner' are his great set pieces."

"And between you and Greg it's safe to say he's got both letter-perfect."

"And spirit-perfect, we're hoping. But I must get on with this ensign for him."

"Pretty good size, isn't it, for a toy ship?"

"But it's a battle-flag. He'll have none but battle-flags. There, I'm up to the stars."

"You're never far from them. Let me make a stretching-frame of my fingers and square this end."

"Do. Not quite so tight. And now—those new stars come in so fast!—how many now?"

"Forty-six."

"M-m—four eights and two sevens?"

"Four eights and two sevens."

She sewed rapidly, and without looking up, until she had completed the first row. "There—there's one of the eights. Now you can breathe again, Andie."

Balfe sat back. "What did you make of Mr. Necker, Marie?"

She too sat back. "I wonder what I did make of him? He was very curious about you."

"That's interesting."

"Yes. He asked questions and I couldn't quite lie to him, and yet I couldn't see why he should expect me to tell him all about you. And so"—she paused and the little half-smile was hovering around again.

"And so?"

"And so I did not attempt to check his imagination." She repeated the conversation of the afternoon. "I meant to speak of it at dinner, Andie, to you and Greg, but I forgot."

"Here's a far traveller—" He paused. She looked up, and quickly looked down.

"—who gives thanks that you forgot, Marie, in that first glad hour Mr. Necker and his—well, his possible mission."

"You know something of him, then, Andie?"

"I'm still guessing. But I'm wondering now if you said to yourself when he had gone: 'After all, what will Greg get out of this government work? Is it fair to himself to refuse those great offers and stick down here? And what will it mean to young Greg?'"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marie Welkie let the ensign drop onto the table. "My very thoughts in words, Andie. And while we're speaking of it, will Greg ever get the recognition due him, Andie?"

"Surely—some day."

"Dear me, that some day! After he is dead, I suppose. You men are the idealists! But being only a woman, Andie Balfe, I don't want to wait that long to see my brother rewarded."

"And being only a man, Marie Welkie, I also want to see my friend rewarded before he's laid away."

"But will he ever?"

"Who could answer that? But I stopped off in Washington on my way, Marie, and had a long talk with a man who is fine enough to appreciate the dreams of idealists and yet sufficiently human to allow for most human weaknesses. We discussed Greg and his work. The construction people were mentioned. He asked me if I thought Greg would go with them. 'And if he does, Mr. President, can he be blamed?' was my answer."

"And how did he take it?"

"He leaned back in his chair and looked through his glasses with his eyebrows drawn together, in that way you'd think he was scowling if you didn't know him. After a moment he said: 'I should be sorry, but if he does, no professional or legal—no, nor moral—obligations can hold him.'"

"There! Greg does not even get credit for——"

"Wait. 'But will he?' he continued. I said that I did not think so. 'What makes you think he won't?' 'Because I know him, sir. But,' I went on, 'don't you think, Mr. President, that by this time he should have a word of encouragement or appreciation?' And that led to quite a talk."

"About Greg, Andie?"

"Greg and his work, Marie."

She leaned her elbows on the table and from between her palms smiled across at him. "When you use that tone, Andie, I know that all women should stay silent. But could—couldn't a little sister to the man in the case be given just a little hint?"

"To the little sister—Oh, much! To her I can say that I have reason to think that something is on its way to her brother which will be very pleasing to her and to him."

"For which, my lord, thy servant thanks thee. You're so specific! If the paymaster is not lost crossing the Gulf, Greg will also probably get his pay next month."

Eight bells echoed from the fleet. "Eight o'clock, and somebody walking the beach! It couldn't be, Andie—it couldn't be that Mr. Necker——"

Balfe gravely shook his head.

"But, Andie," she whispered, "there was the most friendly expression in his eye!"

"If there's a living man, Marie"—he bent over also to whisper—"who could hold speech with you for ten seconds without a more than friendly gleam—" A knock on the veranda door interrupted.

It was Necker. "How do you do again, Miss Welkie?" To her his bow was appreciative, deferential. To Balfe he nodded in a not unfriendly fashion.

"I'm glad to see you again, Mr. Necker. Come in, please. I will call my brother." She pressed a button on the veranda wall. "That will bring him right down, Mr. Necker. And now I'm leaving you with Mr. Balfe. Diana our cook's little boy has a fever——"

"Fever, Marie?"

"Oh, don't worry, Andie, if you're thinking of danger. It's only malaria. And it's only a step or two, and you must stay with Mr. Necker."

Balfe held the door open for her. She paused in the doorway. "I'll be back in half an hour."

"Half an hour! Time is no bounding youth, Marie Welkie."

"Come for me, then—oh, when you please," she whispered, and passed swiftly out.

Necker was examining the shelf of books above the work-table. "Keats? Keats? Oh-h, poetry! Montaigne. Montaigne? Oh, yes!" He took it down. "H-m, in French!" and put it back. One after the other he read the titles. "Elizabethan Verse. E-u-r-i-p-i-d-e-s. Dante. H-m."

Balfe by now had turned from the screen door. Necker pointed to the shelf. "Not a book for a practical man in the whole lot, and"—he held up the ensign—

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"this! Isn't that the dreamer through and through?"

"But you and I, not being dreamers, consider how thankful we should be."

Necker stared in surprise, and then he smiled. "Now, now, I'm meaning no harm to your friend. I guess you don't know what I'm after, though I'll bet I can guess what you're after."

Balfe, fairly meeting Necker's eye, had to smile; and when Necker saw Balfe smile he winked. "You don't s'pose you could come down here to this God-forsaken hole, do you, without somebody getting curious?"

"I suppose it was too much to expect. Have a smoke?"

"Thanks." Necker's tone was polite, but it was a most negligent glance that he gave the box of cigars. There was no name on the box. Balfe, with unsmiling mien, pointed out two small letters on the cover. "H. C., Mr. Necker."

"H. C.?"

"Hernando Cabada, Key West."

"O-ho! How'd you ever manage to get hold of a box of them?"

"They're Welkie's."

"How can he afford 'em? I offered old Cabada a dollar, a dollar and a half, and finally two dollars apiece for a thousand of 'em, coming through Key West the other day—and couldn't get 'em. Nor could all the pull I had in the place get 'em for me. He wasn't going to make any more that week, he said. He's a queer one. He's got all those Socialist chaps going the other way. For why should he work four, five, six hours a day, he said, when he could make all he wanted in one or two? Sells cigars to people he likes for fifteen dollars a hundred, but wouldn't sell to me at any price. I had to take my hat off to him—he stuck. Now, how do you dope a chap like that?"

"How do you?"

"Don't know the real values in life. Maybe a bit soft up top, besides." He lit up and drew several deep inhalations. "M-m—this is a smoke for a man!" He picked up the box gently. "If I thought Welkie'd take it, I'd offer more than a good price for the rest of that box. But"—suspicion was growing in his eyes—"how does it happen—d'y' s'pose somebody's been here ahead of me after all?"

"And will the Little Men tell me things when I'm a big man, papa?"—Page 149.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"He's coming downstairs now—ask him," smiled Balfe.

Welkie stepped into the veranda. "I was in my work-room when the buzzer told me you had come in, Mr. Necker, but on the way down I couldn't help looking in on young Greg. I'm glad to see you."

"I'm glad to meet you, Mr. Welkie. And to get right down to business, I'm the new president of the Gulf Construction Company, and I want to talk a few things over with you."

"Surely."

"Greg"—Balfe had opened the door—"how far up the beach to your cook's shack?"

"Oh, for Marie? A hundred yards that side."

"I'll look in there. Good-night, Mr. Necker."

"Don't hurry away on my account, Mr. Balfe. I'd like you, or any friend of Mr. Welkie and his family, to hear what I have to say. It's a straight open-and-shut proposition I've got."

"Then we'll try to be back to hear some of it. Good-by for a while, then." The door closed behind him.

"Let's sit down, Mr. Necker."

"Thanks. And how did you leave that boy of yours?"

"In his little bed, with his pillow jammed up close to his window-screen, singing the 'Star-Spangled Banner' to himself and looking out on the lights of the fleet. He's afraid they'll steam away before he's seen his fill of them, and tonight he's not going to sleep till he hears taps, he says."

"It must be a great thing to have a boy like him, and to plan for his future and to look forward to what he'll be when he's grown up."

Welkie looked his interrogation.

"Surely. A boy of brains he'll be. I don't have to look at a man or a boy twice. Brains and will power. You could make a great career for him, Welkie—a great engineer, say, if he was started right. But, of course, you'll be in a position by and by to see that he gets the start."

"Started right? What does he want, when he has health and brains and a heart?"

"All fine, but he'll need more than that these days."

"Are these days so different?"

"Different, man! Why, the older a country is, the more civilized it is, the more education means, the more social position counts, the more money counts."

"How much more?"

"A heap more. Listen. Your father on twenty-five hundred a year, say, could put his children through college, couldn't he? On twenty-five hundred a year today a man with a family has to battle to keep out of the tenement districts. A dozen years from now, if you're getting no more money than you're getting now, you'll be wondering if you won't have to take that boy out of school and put him to work. Isn't that so?"

Welkie made no answer.

"All right. But before I go any farther, let me say that I want you, Mr. Welkie, for our new job."

"What's wrong with the man you've got?"

"He won't do. You're the one man we want, and if there's money enough in our strong-box, we're going to get you. And now that I've got that off, let me show you where it is for your higher—I say your higher, not alone your moneyed—interests to come with us, Mr. Welkie. There's that boy of yours—you'd surely like to see him a great man?"

"I surely wouldn't dislike it."

"Good. Then give him a chance. Get rid first of the notion that a poor boy has as good a chance as another. He hasn't. I know that all our old school-books told us different—along with some other queer things. No wonder. Nine times out of ten they were got up by men born poor and intended for children born poor. It is a fine old myth in this country that only the poor boy ever gets anywhere. As a matter of fact, the poor boys outnumber the comfortably born boys ten to one, yet run behind in actual success. Even history 'll tell you that. Alexander—son of a king. Cæsar? Frederick the Great? Oh, loads of 'em! You don't seem to think much of that?"

"Not a great deal," smiled Welkie. "If you're going to call the long roll of history, it looks to me like it's a mistake to name only three, or twenty-three, or

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thirty-three men. You cast your eye along that little book-shelf there and——"

"Oh, I've been looking them over—Dante and Michael Angelo and Homer and Shakespeare and that knight-errant Spaniard and the rest of 'em. But I'm not talking of poets and philosophers and the like. I'm talking of the men who bossed the job when they were alive."

"But how about those who bossed it after they were dead?"

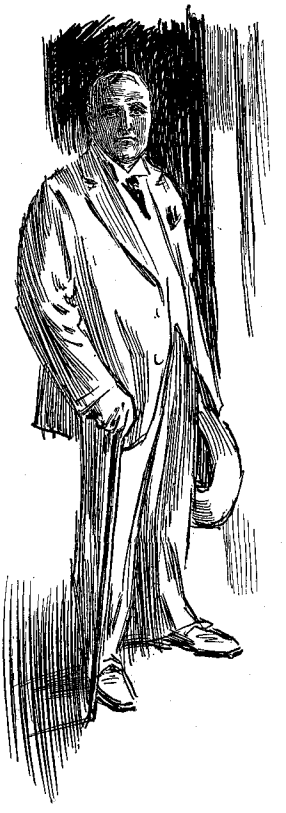
"But, damn it, Welkie, I'm talking of men of action."

"Men of action or—ditch-diggers?"

"What!"

"That's what I call most of 'em, Necker—ditch-diggers. If your man of action hasn't himself thought out what he's doing, that's what he looks like to me—a ditch-digger, or at best a foreman of ditch-diggers. And a ditch-digger, a good ditch-digger, ought to be respected—until he thinks he's the whole works. Those kings of yours may have bossed the world, Necker, but, so long's we're arguing it, who bossed them?"

"You mean that the man who bosses the world for thirty or forty years isn't quite a man?"



"Good-by, Welkie. I hope you get your reward some day, though I doubt it."—Page 158.

"Surely he's quite a man; but the man who bosses men's minds a thousand years after he's dead—he's the real one. And that kind of a man, so far's I know things, Necker, never lived too comfortably on earth. He can't. I tell you, Necker, you can't be born into a fat life without being born with a fat soul, too."

"And are you intending to stint yourself in the expectation of running things after you're dead, Welkie?"

Welkie noted the half-ironical smile, but he answered simply, evenly, "It's not in me; but I'd live even a sparer life than I do, if I thought anybody after me had a chance."

"You're a hard man to argue with, Welkie, and I'm not going to argue with you—not on things dead and gone. You're too well posted for me. But suppose it was that way once, is it that way to-day? I'll bring it right home to you. Here's the overpowering figure in public life, Roosevelt, a man you think a lot of probably—was he born in poverty?"

"No, but I notice he cut away from his comfortable quarters about as soon as his upbringing 'd let him."

"Wait. In finance who? Morgan? All right. Son of a millionaire financier, wasn't he?"

"But if you're going to bring in money——"

"I know. What of the Carnegies and the Rockefellers? you're going to say. There's where you think you've got me, but you haven't; for I've always said that being born in poverty fits a man to make money above all things, because he's brought up to value it out of all proportion to everything else. But where are they after they get it? America's full of millionaires who came up out of nothing, but who had to work so hard getting started that they'd nothing left in 'em or didn't know anything but money when they got to where they could stop to look around. If they had any genius to start with, it was dried out of 'em trying to get going. But except in money-making you mustn't handicap a boy. Hitch any two-mile trotter to an ice-wagon and where will he finish? You overweight your boy going off and he will be handicapped out of the race, too. But can I have another one of those cigars?"

"Help yourself."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Thanks. I wish I had your pull with old Cabada. Now, Welkie, I'm only trying to show you where you ought to cast aside certain outworn traditions and face actual present-day truths. Now listen. You probably don't believe I'm a villain, Welkie, and you know I represent a powerful corporation—reputable even if powerful. Yes. Well, this work of ours is good, useful work—don't you think we can fairly claim that?"

"Beautiful work—beautiful."

"Good. Then wouldn't you like to see that work growing under your hand—ten thousand men driving night and day, and that concrete structure reaching out, as you've planned it, in long white stretches to the sea?"

"It's certainly a fine prospect."

"Then why not do it? What's the use, Welkie? You're the best man in the country for us and we're the best concern for you. We offer you the biggest job in sight. What d'y' say? You've been turning us down, but think it over now."

Welkie shook his head.

"Why not?"

"Because—but they are coming back."

Necker could see the hands of Balfe and Miss Welkie unclasping in the half-darkness as they entered. He touched Welkie on the arm. "Why not tell Miss Welkie and Mr. Balfe what it is I'm after?"

"But I'm doing work here that I've got to finish, and they know that."

"I know you are, but consider this. And would you listen also, Miss Welkie? What does the government pay you here, Welkie? I know of course, but I'm asking."

"Two hundred a month and this house."

"And I'm offering you two thousand! And—listen to this, please, Miss Welkie. In place of a mosquito-infested shoe-box of a shack in a God-forsaken hole, we'll give you and your brother a fine concrete house on a breezy hill in God's own country—a real home, Miss Welkie, with great halls and wide verandas and sun-lighted rooms through which the sea breezes will blow at night so you can sleep in peace. A mansion, Miss Welkie, with billiard and music rooms, where you can receive your friends in the style a lady should, or a man of your brother's ability should. A place to be proud of, Miss Welkie—palm-studded, clean-clipped lawn rolling down to the sea. And a sea—I'll bet you know it, Mr. Balfe—a blue-and-green sea rolling down over to coral reefs as white as dogs' teeth, a shore-front that needs only building up to be as pretty as anything in your swell Mediterranean places. What d'y' say, Welkie? And here's the contract now, all ready for you, and pay begins to-day."

"It's alluring, it surely is. But I must finish here."

"But you'll soon be done here. A few weeks more, they told me in Washington. What are you going to do then?"

"I hadn't thought."

"Well, why not think of it now? Consider your boy, what it will mean to him some day. Why not ask Miss Welkie?"

Welkie turned gravely to his sister. "What do you say to that fine house with the grand dining-room, and the music-room, and a jasmine-twined pergola to sit out under of a night—and watch the moon roll up from the shining sea? I know the house—it's all that Mr. Necker says it is."

"And mahogany, Miss Welkie, and all kinds of beautiful linen for the table. Imagine that, with cut glass and silver and the electric candles gleaming over it of a night."

"I would dearly love to preside at the head of that table, Mr. Necker, but Mr. Balfe was speaking of something that perhaps my brother should hear about first."

"What's that, Andie?"

"Let it wait, Greg."

"Better now. What is it?"

"You may not like it."

"Maybe not, but we may as well have it now, Andie."

"I was to tell you that after this work is done there's another job waiting you on the west coast, just as important, just as needful of your supervision, and no more reward to it than this."

"Whee-eu!" whistled Necker. "The steamer captain had him right."

"Then I'm afraid"—Welkie turned to Necker—"it's off between us."

"Don't say that yet. Wait till you hear. What are you working for? Leaving the money end out of it, which I know

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you don't care for and never will care for, what are you getting? You want recognition? And prestige? Do you get them? Not a bit. Who really knows of this work? A few engineers who keep tabs on everything, yes. Who else? Nobody. The government, for good reasons of their own, don't want it mentioned in the press. Why, it's hardly mentioned in the engineering journals."

"Even so. It will go down in the records that I did it."

"Will it? Look here. I've been waiting for that." From his inside coat-pocket Necker drew out several type-written sheets. "Mind you, I didn't want to produce this, but I'm forced to. My first interests are my company's. There is a copy of the last official report on this work. Read what that says. The credit is given you see, to whom? To you? No, no. Not a mention of you except as a civilian engineer who assisted."

"But how did you get hold of this?" Welkie held the papers, but without showing any inclination to read them.

"Does how I got hold of it matter?"

"That's right, it doesn't matter, Andie." Welkie offered the papers to Balfe.

Balfe waved them back. "I saw the original of that report in Washington. What Mr. Necker says is so."

"There!" Necker brought his fist down on the table. "The man of all others to bear me out." He stepped close to Balfe. "I couldn't place you for a while. Thanks for that."

"Don't hurry your credit slip," snapped Balfe with his eyes on Welkie.

Welkie silently passed the papers back to Necker.

"You believe me now, Mr. Welkie?"

"I don't know's I doubted you, Mr. Necker. It caught me just a mite below the belt, and I had to spar for wind."

"But it wasn't I who hit you below the belt, remember. Neither did I want to destroy your illusions, but I did want to show you the facts—the truth, not the glittering romance, of life. Now they're offering you another job. Will you, or somebody else, get the credit for that? You? No, sir! You'll get neither money nor reputation out of it. With us you'd get both."

"Probably that's so." Welkie spoke slowly. "But people in general will credit me with loyalty at least."

"Will they? Even where they know of your work, will they? When a man turns down an offer like ours, people in general will give him credit for little besides simple innocence. I'm telling you they'll be more likely to think you are controlled by some queer primitive instinct which will not allow you to properly value things. I'll leave it to your friend. What do you say to that, Mr. Balfe?"

"I think you're a good deal right."

"There! Your own friend agrees with me!" exclaimed Necker.

"You don't think that, Andie?" Welkie, puzzled, stared at Balfe.

"What I mean, Greg, and what Mr. Necker very well understands me to mean, is that surely there are hordes of people who never will believe that any man did anything without a selfish motive."

"That don't seem right, Andie."

"No, it doesn't, but it's so, Greg. But"—he set his jaw at Necker—"what if they do think so? Let them. Let them ride hog-back through the mud if they will. Oceans of other people, oceans, will still be looking up to men like Greg Welkie here." He rested his hand on his friend's shoulder. "You stick to your aeroplaning in the high air, Greg."

"And chance a fall?" suggested Necker.

"And chance a fall!" snapped Balfe. "But there are no falls if the machine is built right and the aviator doesn't ride to applause."

Marie Welkie's hand reached out and pressed one of Balfe's. He held it. "It's all right—he's a rock," he whispered.

"I must say, Welkie"—Necker fixed his eyes on the floor and spoke slowly—"that the government in this case seems to be represented by a man of picturesque speech, a man with imagination. I can only handle facts, and in a matter-of-fact way. I ask you to consider this: you have a boy, and there is Miss Welkie, a lovely, cultured woman, and"—he jerked his head suddenly up—"but what's the use? Here's a contract, needing only your signature, and here's a check, needing only my signature. I said two thousand a month. Suppose we make it three? Here's pen and ink, and remem-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ber your boy is looking out on the battleships from his little bed upstairs."

"You're right, Necker, he is in his little bed upstairs and I've got to think of him." He turned to Balfe. "The President, Andie, just naturally expects me to tackle this new job?"

"I think he does, Greg."

"Then there's only one answer left, Mr. Necker. No."

"Wait again. Welkie, you've a God-given genius for concrete work. I came here to get you and I—sign now and I'll make it four thousand."

"No."

"No? Why, look here! Here's a check. See—I'm signing it in blank. I'm leaving it to you to fill it in for what you please. For what you please for your first year for us, and the contract to run five years at the same rate. Remember, you'be trimmed once and you're likely to be trimmed again."

"Let them trim me and keep on trimming me! The work is here and I did it. They know it and I know it. If nobody but myself and my God know, we know. And no official or unofficial crookedness can wipe it out."

"But that little fellow upstairs with his face against the screen?"

"It's that little fellow I'm thinking of. He'll never have to explain why his father reneged on a job he was trusted to do."

"But you haven't promised anybody in writing?"

"No."

"And, as I make it out, you haven't even given your word?"

"No."

"Then what right has anybody to——"

"He don't need to have any *right*. He just thinks I'm the kind of a man he can count on, and, in a show-down, that's the kind of a man I reckon I want him to think I am."

"Then it is finally no?"

"No."

"No?"

"No. And let that be the end of the noes."

Necker smoked thoughtfully. Then, slowly gathering up his papers, he said, "I'm licked, Welkie; but I would like to know what licked me. It might save me from making the same mistake again."

"Why, I don't know's I know what you mean; but there is one thing, Necker: if it ever happens that a nation which don't like us comes steaming up here to get hold of this base, to batter it to pieces, say, she won't. No. And why? Because it's no haphazard mixture of water and sand. It's a good job, and if I'm no more than a lump of clay in my grave, I want to be able to roll over and say"—a flame seemed to shoot from his eyes—"'You sons o' guns, you can't get in, because what you've come to take was built right, and 'twas me built it, by God!'"

Necker studied him. "Well, if that isn't throwing a halo around your work, I don't know what is. I've met that before, too. But you've got more than that—what is it?"

"If I have, I don't know it." He paused. "I know," whispered Marie in Balfe's ear—"the flag!"

"But if there's anything else there, it must've been born in me, and so that's no credit. But if there is anything else there, I want my boy to have it, too."

Necker picked up his hat and cane. "He'll have it, never fear, Welkie, and the more surely because he won't know it either. I'm off. Do you mind if I take another of Cabada's cigars?"

"Surely. Help yourself. Fill your case."

"Thanks." He lit up. "These *are* a smoke. I wish he'd let me have some, but he's like you something—he's only to be got at from the inside, and I guess I'm not on the inside. Good-by, Welkie. I hope you get your reward some day, though I doubt it. Good-by, Mr. Balfe. You're the first of your kind I ever met. You fooled me, but I'll be ready for you next time. Good-by, Miss Welkie. I forgot to say"—he smiled slyly—"there was a sixty-horse-power French car and a fifty-foot motor-launch went with that house. Good-by."

The pebbly beach crunched under Necker's receding feet. "Dear me," sighed Marie, "don't you feel half-sorry for him, Andie?"

"Just about half. I'll bet he plays a good game of poker. But, Greg"—Balfe drew a square white envelope from an inner coat-pocket—"I was given a letter the other day to give you—in case you were still on the job here."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

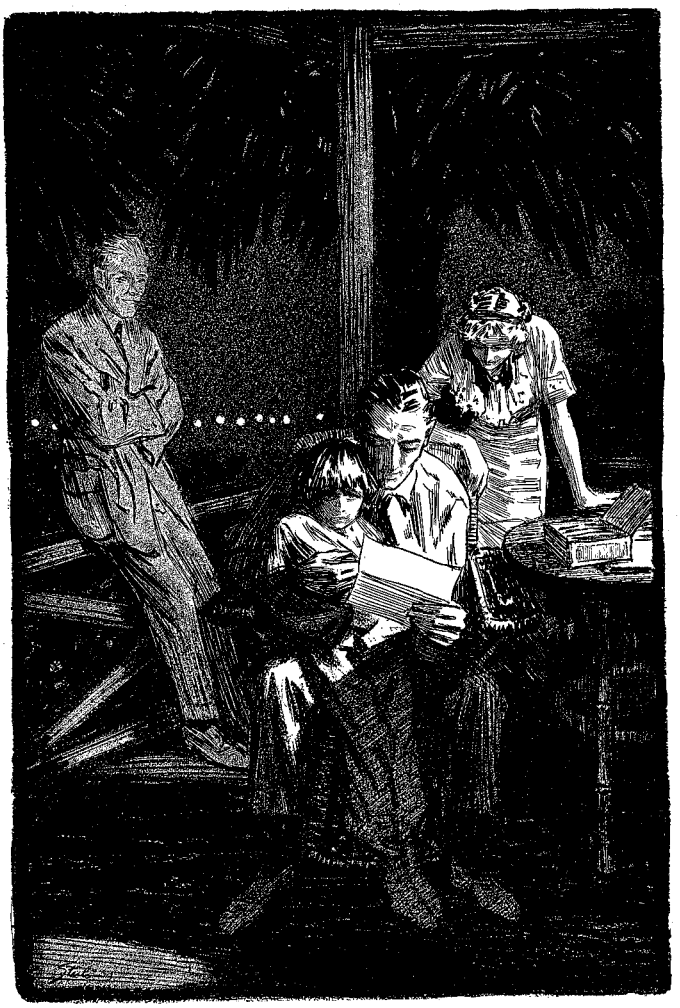
"On the job? Where else could I be?" He had taken the envelope and was about to rip it carelessly open, when his eye caught the embossed blue lettering on the corner:

THE WHITE HOUSE

He held it up in bewilderment. "Not from the President, Andie?"

"Why not? Read it."

Slowly Welkie read it. He took it over to the light at the little table and read it again. He dropped it on the table and gazed through the screen at the lights of the fleet. After a time he said in a low tone, "I must tell Sonnie-Boy," and, turning, went inside the house.



He took the letter from his sister. "Look here, Sonnie-Boy. Here's a man says your papa is the greatest man ever was in his line."—Page 160.

"Is it very private, Andie?" whispered Marie.

"No, no."

"Then I'm going to read it."

She read it. "Why, Andie!" she gasped, and, crowding to the light, she also read it again. Her face was alight when she looked up at last. "Andie, Andie, isn't it splendid! If Mr. Necker could only hear this:

"'It is a fine thing in these days of ma-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

terialism that a man of your genius can set aside the allurements of money and fame, and exile yourself to a region where certain hardship and probable disease await you; and this only that your country may be served.'

"And the rest of it! O Greg!"

Welkie was back with his boy in his arms. He took the letter from his sister. "Look here, Sonnie-Boy, what do you think? Here's a man says your papa is the greatest man ever was in his line. Years from now you'll look at that letter and perhaps you'll be proud of your papa. Your papa's boasting now, Sonnie-Boy, but only you and your auntie and godfather can hear him, and they'll never tell. So that's all right. 'Our papa was as good as anybody in his line'—a great man said so. What do you say, little four-and-a-half, you'll be a good man, too, in your line some day, won't you?"

"Can I be a fighter, papa, on a big gunship?"

"Well, if you're bound to go that way, I don't see who's to stop you, Sonnie-Boy. But if you are, whether it's a sword to your hip or a lanyard to your neck, here's hoping you'll never go over the side of your ship without"—he picked the ensign up—"you leave your colors flying over her. And now we'll go back to bed, Sonnie-Boy, and this time we'll go to sleep." In the doorway he stopped. "What do you reckon Necker would say to that letter, Andie?"

Balfe smiled. "He'd probably say, 'Welkie, you ought to publish that letter—capitalize it,' and think you were four kinds of a fool if you didn't."

"Well, I won't publish it or capitalize it. I'm going to frame it and hang it at the foot of your bed, Sonnie-Boy, where you'll see it mornings when you wake."

Facing each other across the little worktable were Marie Welkie and Andie Balfe. She had said: "You surely have been my brother's friend, and, if you were not already so successful, I could wish a great reward for you."

He laid one hand of his gently down on hers. "Wish the reward then, Marie. Do, dear, wish it, for I'm not successful. I played hard at my game, because playing it made me forget other things. Almost anybody playing a game long enough becomes half-expert at it. But successful? No, no, dear. So far I seem to have travelled only unending roads through bleak countries; and I'm dreading to go back to them alone."

Beyond the veranda screen the fireflies were flashing; farther out, the little green-and-red side-lights of the steaming launches, like other colored fire-flies, were sliding by; to the mastheads of the battleships the red-and-white signal-lights were winking and glowing. The night was alive with colorful things—closing her eyes, Marie could hear the lapping of little waves over pebbles, the challenging hail of a sailor on watch, the music of a far ship's band. She bent her head to hear it better—the sweetly faint cadence of that far-away band.

"And when was it you began to think of me, Andie?"

"Since those first days, Marie, when your brother and I bunked together in the old S. A. M. construction camp. He used to read me letters of yours from home. You were only a little girl then, and it was years before I saw you; but I knew what you looked like even before I stole your photograph——"

"Stole?"

"I did. Greg dropped it one day. I found it—and never gave it back. There it is—after nine years."

She laughed when she saw it. "Why, I can't make out to see what I looked like then, Andie!"

"I know what you looked like. I've kissed the face away, dear, but I know. In nine years, Marie, I never shifted from one coat to another without shifting your photograph, too. If anything had happened to me, they would have found your photograph on me with your address on the back. 'Then,' I used to say to myself, 'She'll know. And Greg won't mind my stealing it.'" He laid it face up between them on the table. "The miles you've travelled with me, dear heart, and never knew! Back in the days of the construction camp they used to find sketches of a girl's head in my note-books, a beautiful head badly done—drawn from that photograph. But after I met you——"

"And after you met me, Andie?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Then I needed no photograph, though look and look at it I surely did. Steamers in western seas, battle-ships in eastern waters, balustrades of palaces—wherever it might be I was whirling with this old earth around, I've had your face to look at. And when I couldn't see for the darkness—rolled up in my rubber poncho, in no more romantic a place than the muck of a swamp, I've looked up through the swaying branches—or in the lee of a windy hill, it might be, with no more to hinder than the clear air, I've looked up and marked your face in the swirling clouds: your nose, your chin, the lips so shyly smiling. And if through the clouds a pair of stars would break, I'd mark them for your shining eyes, Marie."

"Poetry again, Andie!" She was laughing, but also she was melting under his eyes.

"If that's poetry, then I'm losing respect for it. It's a weak thing, Marie, and——"

"Sh-h—if somebody should be walking on the beach!"

"Let them, sweetheart. It's a fine night for a walk, and what harm is truth?"

"But I don't want all the world to hear, Andie. For my poor heart was aching, too, Andie, and now it wants it all to itself, Andie mine."

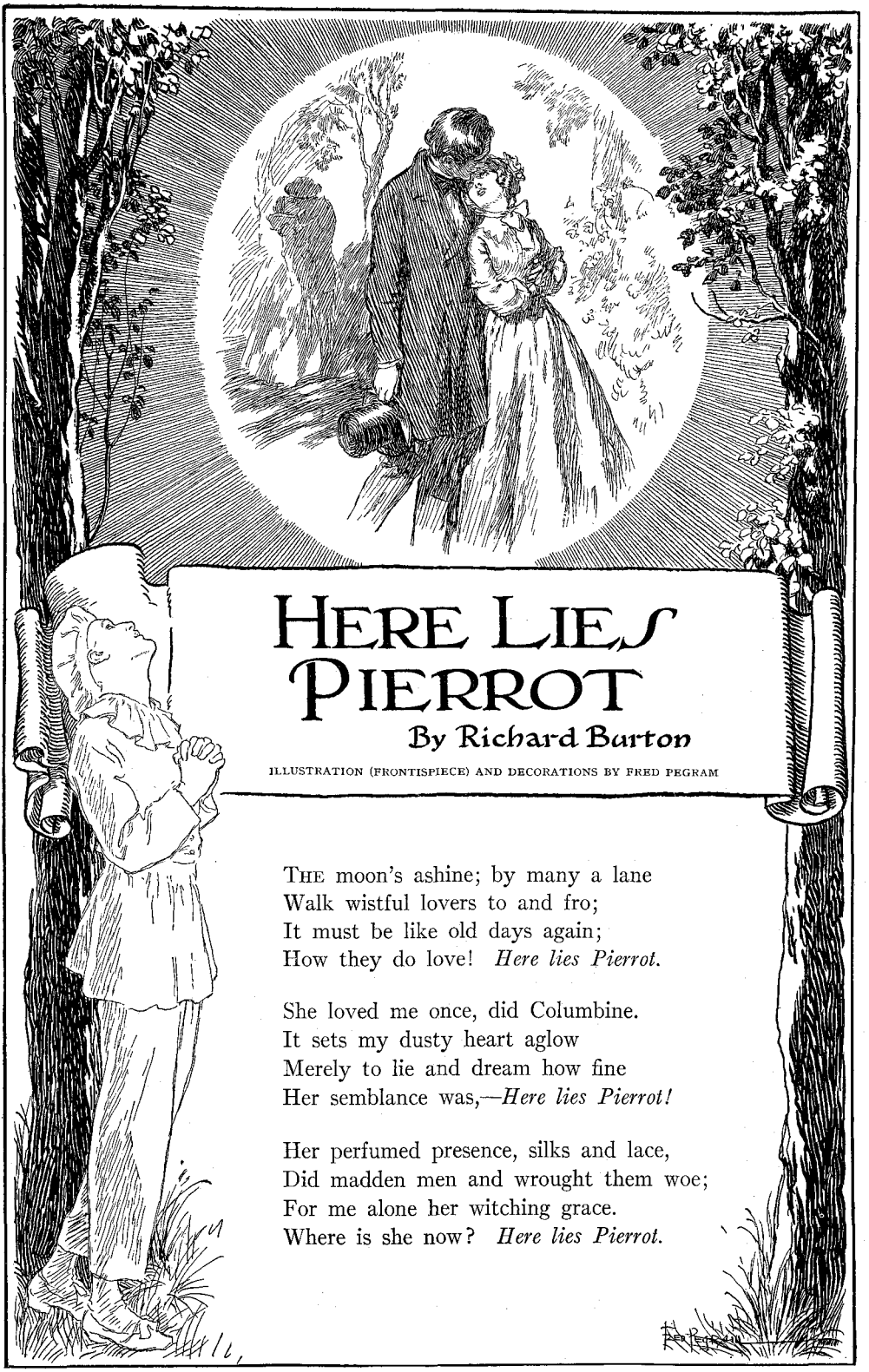
It was taps on the battle-fleet. Over the mellowing, detaining waters of the bay the long-drawn bugles echoed. Good-night, good-ni-i-ght, g-o-o-d–n-i-g-h-t—they said, and gently, softly, whisperingly died away.

"He's asleep at last." Welkie was standing in the door. "And I don't know but we'd all better be getting to sleep, too. For to-morrow morning, you know, we— Wha-at!"

Welkie's friend was standing before him. "Shunt care for the morrow, Greg. Greater things than have happened are happening around you. The dream of years has come to pass. And we—we, Greg——"

He looked to her, and tremulous, vivid, she came, and with her at his side he was himself again. "Marie is to take me for Sonnie-Boy's uncle, and, Greg, we want your blessing."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



HERE LIES PIERROT

By Richard Barton

ILLUSTRATION (FRONTISPIECE) AND DECORATIONS BY FRED PEGRAM

THE moon's ashine; by many a lane
Walk wistful lovers to and fro;
It must be like old days again;
How they do love! *Here lies Pierrot.*

She loved me once, did Columbine.
It sets my dusty heart aglow
Merely to lie and dream how fine
Her semblance was,—*Here lies Pierrot!*

Her perfumed presence, silks and lace,
Did madden men and wrought them woe;
For me alone her witching grace.
Where is she now? *Here lies Pierrot.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

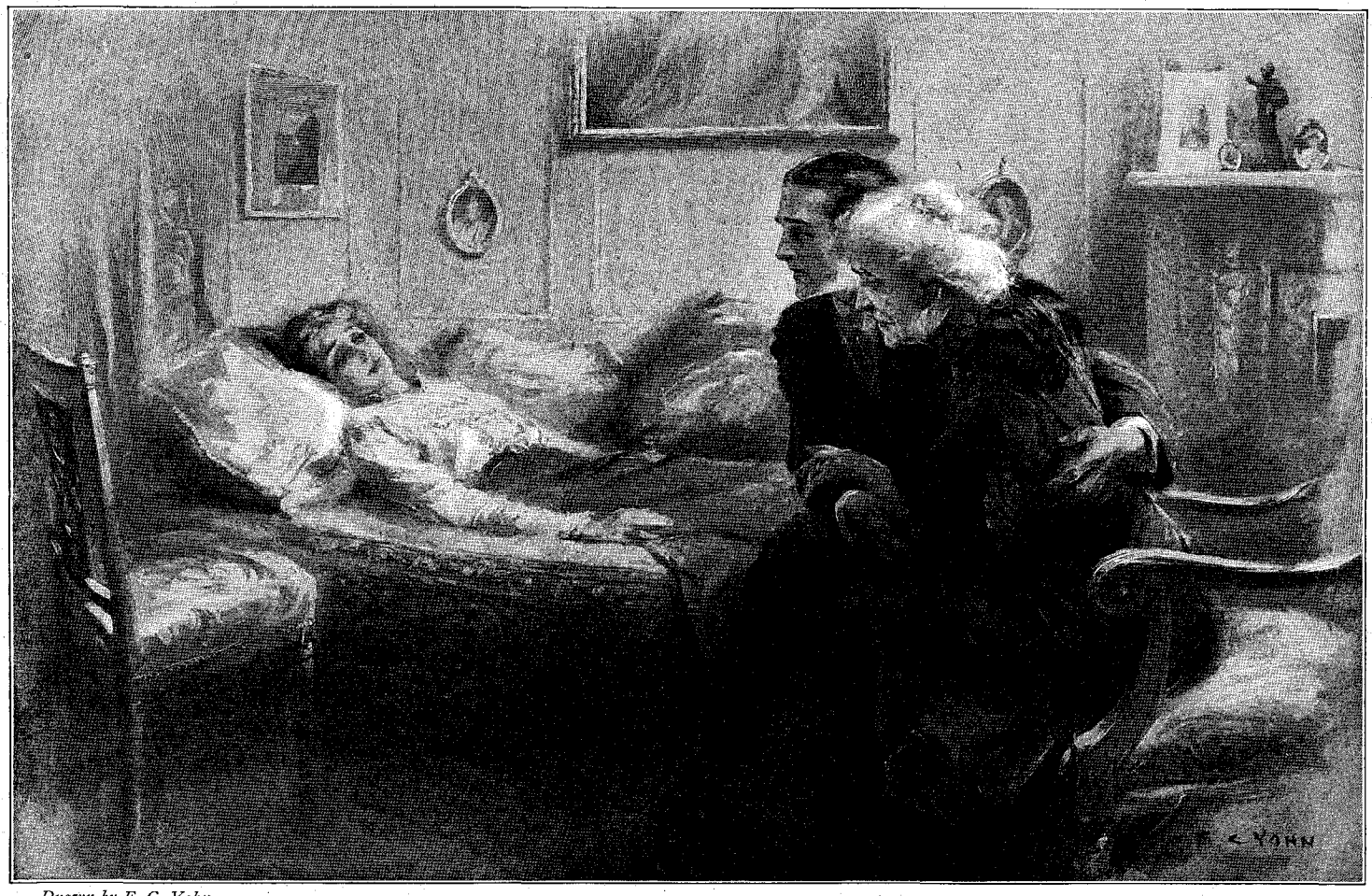
We two walked once beneath the moon—
Yellow it hung, and large and low—
And listened to the tender tune
Of nightingales,—*Here lies Pierrot!*

Our foolish vows of passion shook
The very stars, they trembled so.
How it comes back, her soft, shy look,
Now I am dead! *Here lies Pierrot!*

These other men and maids, who stroll
Through moonlit poplar trees arow,
Does each play the enchanted rôle
We phantoms played? *Here lies Pierrot!*

O joy, that I remember yet
Sweet follies of the long ago!
Dear heaven, I would not quite forget!
The moon's ashine; *Here lies Pierrot!*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Drawn by F. C. Yohn.

Peter and I sat down with one accord and put our arms around each other.—Page 172.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE OLD ORDER CHANGES

By Katharine Holland Brown

Illustration by F. C. Yohn

GWENDOLEN, my daughter-in-law, and Isabel, my granddaughter, were in the library, threshing out the one unescapable topic, when I stopped in to dinner. I had attended two receptions that afternoon, then driven down to Gramercy Park to our needle-work guild. Therefore, I had already enjoyed four consecutive impassioned hours of equal suffrage. Considering that I shall be seventy-seven my next birthday, I ought, with Saint Paul, to be enduring in all things. But I must say it was harrowing to find my own kin still striving on that trampled field.

"Oh, join the League, Isabel, if you must." Gwendolen's sweet, vague eyes clouded. She drooped and gathered her Chantilly scarf closer around her slender bare shoulders. "But why share its activities? Fairs and processions are so common! Don't you say so, mother?"

"Then why join the League at all?" I countered.

"Worthy logic, granny." Isabel turned from the fire, where she was drying her splashed riding-habit, and gave me an approving slap with a large sinewy young hand. "You won't see me sit back and let everybody else do the work and gather in all the glory. And think, mother. Mrs. Stuyvesant Jones and both the Misses Prendergast are box-holders. Margaretta Bogardus will lead the mounted parade. Mrs. Sands says she'll sell 'Votes for Women.'"

"Mrs. Sands? Not Mrs. Sutphen Sands!" Gwendolen sat up, quite erect. "Well, of course—if you want a booth at the fair, Isabel, I do not object. Though all this agitation is a mere fad of the day. Don't you think so, mother?"

"It has lasted several days," said I.

"Yes. They talked about it 'way back before the war. Didn't they, granny? Only they called it 'women's rights.' And they sent petitions to Congress. And wore bloomers. Horrid!" Isabel scraped the last mud from her divided skirt and dipped absently into the large silver box on the mantel.

"Yes, they talked about it a good deal."

"Well, it was a waste of time then. As it is now—(Isabel, put down that cigarette! Don't you know how granny loathes the mere *idea!*)—no real lady desires the ballot. I'm sure *I* never wanted any more rights than Charles Edward wanted to give me. And *I've* been a very contented woman." Gwendolen turned the matched sapphires on her finger with a patient sigh. "But few women really know when they are well off."

"You bet they don't. Especially when they're scrubbing office floors. Or running a machine in a sweat-shop. Or hustling plates in a quick-lunch."

Gwendolen jumped. So did I.

"Peter Wentworth! Where did you drop from?"

"I've been here on the lounge an hour, mother. Listening to you and sis settle our national problems. Let me take your wraps, granny. Whew, observe the nifty lid! I'll wager, Mrs. Frederic D. Wentworth, that you blew in half your pay envelope for it, down on Grand Street."

Peter is my eldest grandson. I can never look at him without a twinge of resentment toward Charles Edward and Gwendolen, because they did not name him for his grandfather. For he is the breathing image of Frederic Wentworth as a young man. To be sure, he is not quite so distinguished in manner. But that will come with time. He is a great hulking silent boy, with thatched black hair, and dark heavy-lidded eyes, and shoulders as broad as the everlasting hills. His jaw is set square and hard, with the precise little cleft that I used to tease Frederic about. His eyes have Frederic's rare gleam of fun. His voice rings with

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Frederic's steady deep tones. And even Charles Edward admits, with shamefaced pride, that he has inherited all his grandfather's genius as an engineer. He is barely twenty-six, yet they talk of giving him the whole South American branch next year. As a rule, he is as communicative as one of his own concrete pillars. But to-night his tongue was loosed.

"So you eavesdropped?" teased Isabel.

"Yes. Now I'm going to put in my little oar. You think you're a suffragist, don't you, sis? Bless your heart, you're plunging into the fray with all the high-souled fervor that you'd plunge into a bridge tournament. And you, mother, you think you're an anti. You've got about as much stern womanly conviction in your nice fluffy topknot as a six-weeks' gosling."

"Why, Peter——"

"Are all your friends like that? Are all you earnest workers hiking into line because Mrs. Sutphen Sands is driving the band-wagon? And, mother, do all you antis base your opposition on the unassailable truth that you yourselves own meek, well-trained providers like dad? Oh, you guileless Pharisees! Even if you don't give two cents for the franchise, why can't you remember the other woman?"

"What other woman, my son?"

"The woman who doesn't ride in the band-wagon. The woman who rides in the trolley-cars. And hangs to a strap." Peter's stolid young face grew grim. His hard jaw clinched. "The woman who sews all day, nine stories up in a fire-trap loft, while her babies are playing down in the gutter. The woman who is standing behind a counter and earning almost half enough to keep body and soul together."

"Well, Peter! Why can't you men reform our economic abuses?"

"We could. But—we don't." Peter picked up Gwendolen's delicate arm and twisted her bangles. His level eyes looked past her, darkening. "But if girls like you and sis would once set to work, there's nothing you couldn't do. Or challenge us into doing. Go get your vote, mother. Then get busy. You protected women owe the suffrage to your own selves. But you owe it ten times over to the other woman."

Then Peter came to himself. He stood up, turning scarlet to his thatched black hair.

"Really, son, you sound quite convincing!"

"Yes, you're a valuable convert." Isabel's eyes danced. "You should have marched in the martyr squad last spring."

Whereat Isabel ducked. But Peter merely eyed her. Then——

"I'm going to march with the martyrs next April all right. Going to be flag-bearer. There, now."

And with that bomb-shell Peter stalked from the room and banged the door.

"Well, mother! Will you hear that!" Isabel stared.

"Settlement ideals, as usual. Such emotional rubbish as Peter is always bringing home!" Gwendolen frowned.

Out of business hours Peter's two interests in life are his troop of small Goths and Vandals down at Norwich House, and his racing automobile. His grandfather, too, was devoted to his Sunday-school class of village boys, with this difference—that Frederic taught his charges Watts's hymns, while Peter teaches his jiu-jutsu. But it works out to much the same end.

Suddenly Isabel laughed out.

"Settlement ideals? Never, mother. Some girl has been talking suffrage to Peter, that's all. Didn't you notice how pat it reeled out? All our compelling arguments, all our tenderest tear-starters, a little mussy from being packed tight in Peter's infant mind, yet spun off smooth as ticker tape."

"You're too absurd, Isabel." Gwendolen looked ruffled. "Peter has never looked at any girl."

"The girl may have looked at Peter. Anyway, Peter never built that starry pile. Wonder if it was Margaretta Bogardus?"

"Margaretta Bogardus? That great noisy, red-cheeked creature! With her dogs and her horses and her fencing bouts!" Poor Gwendolen's maternal feathers bristled. "Isabel, how can you!"

"Because solemn-eyed overgrown babes like Peter are Margaretta's natural prey. Won't Peter catch it at dinner! Wait and see!"

However, Peter sat through dinner, panoplied in unconcern. Not one of Isa-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bel's gibes could pierce that stodgy mail. For my part, I felt more like hugging Peter than heckling him. I dare say I'm chicken-hearted. But I can never look at Peter, the great insolent, magnificent young brute, without seeing the soft little puppy armful that he was, only a year or so ago. And then I see the taciturn middle-aged citizen that he will be in a year or so to come. And it makes me ache to keep him big and insolent and stodgy as long as I can.

"I say, granny!"

I had just stepped into my limousine when Peter's shoulders loomed at the door.

"I say, granny," he spoke with a queer nervous stammer, "I—I'm going uptown, too. Mayn't I steal a ride?"

"To be sure."

Peter's big body plunged in.

"You don't care if we speed? Hit her up, Smith. It's almost nine."

Peter's idea of Paradise, I am assured, is a world where speed laws are unknown.

"Theatre, Peter?"

"No. Not the theatre. It's— Look here, granny. You haven't anything doing to-night? Come along with me. That's a good girl."

"Come along where?"

"Over to Aberdeen Hall." Again that odd nervous stammer. "It's tremendously interesting. Cross my heart. And there's one speaker—I mean, one speech—I want you to hear. Come, now."

One moment my weary flesh rebelled at three more hours of equal suffrage. Then—to be frank, I stand with Gwendolen concerning Margaretta Bogardus. For all her blue blood and her athletic prowess, that estimable young rail-splitter does not appeal to me. Could I but see, with my own eyes, whether Margaretta's stalwart charms had cast the spell!

I shrank into Aberdeen Hall in Peter's wake, feeling a spy in camp. But I all but forgot Peter in the glowing pageant of the meeting itself.

The great hall was thronged. Tier on tier they rose, faces on crowding faces. Faces elate, perplexed, dulled with uncertainty, shining with glad belief. The high enthusiasm of that hour thrilled even my staid old pulses. For it went with the swing, the verve, the passion that is the very flaming essence of to-day's victorious youth. Yet I felt a curious pang, as I often do, to see the grave, majestic reforms, that my own youth held in such reverence, go frisking past at a quickstep, the long-metre attitude put by for ragtime. The old order changeth. Perhaps it is as well.

So I sat there in that gay, friendly crowd. We who are old will go drifting back. . . . I looked again on my first glimpse of equal suffrage. Fifty years ago. And it seems yesterday.

I was a royally consequential young wife in those days, mistress of the finest frame house and the most prosperous farm in all Saline County, Kansas. I had four children; even my own Spartan judgment confessed them the most magnificent children eye ever beheld. And I had Frederic. What more of right or privilege, what more of glory and honor, could mortal woman ask? So it was in kind condescension that I had opened my shuttered parlor and bidden my neighbors to meet the three pilgrim women who had come among us "from the East," bringing their new bewildering message.

They were women of prestige in their own community. One was the sister of a famous clergyman, one a teacher, the third a lecturer of repute. They came as bound upon the ministries of angels. But, alas! to our amused superior young eyes, they came as angels unawares. They were old maids, poor souls. They were straggling about the country on a daft quixotic quest. Worst of all, their raiment shocked us to horrified mirth. For the whelming tide of their brave dream had swallowed up all sense of humor and fitness, and they were garbed to make angels weep, in limp flabby cutaways and neat frilled bloomers—oh, pitiful!—and crueler than any caricature.

From our walled firesides we listened to these lone prophetesses, crying their tale down the gray windy road. We heard Elizabeth Lyman and her pounding arguments that the franchise would widen our own horizon, blandly unmoved. Why need we look past our own doors? Were not our babies thriving, our men contented? We heard Rebecca Lowe's plea for a woman's share in the interests of her men with tranquil scorn. Could anything be more tedious than "men-folks' talk"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of crops and politics? Better the chatter of our looms, the drama of our own hearths. And between us there rose a curious barrier—a barrier built up of their angry fervor, of our cold unconcern.

At last their leader rose again. Her thin hands shook. Her haggard face was flaming.

"Can nothing stir you?" she cried. She stood there, ungainly, tragic, in her dreadful clothes: a woman denied, yet sombrely, terribly, the woman. "If you will not rouse yourselves for your own sakes, for your men's sakes, for your children—then, in heaven's name, for what cause will you awaken?"

Suddenly there was a rustle across the room. Miranda Porter sat there. Miranda was the youngest of us all, a slip of a girl, not yet twenty-four. Yet she had her three children, and her old grandmother, and her big half-broken farm, all on her frail little shoulders. David, her husband, had been thrown from his horse and killed early that spring. And on Miranda lay the whole burden of life.

Now she stood up, painfully abashed, but quivering with eagerness.

"May I be excused, please, ma'am?" She bobbed a scared courtesy to Elizabeth Lyman, like a little girl to her schoolmistress. "I—I think I hear my baby crying. And I'm anxious to see if my little boy got home safe from school. It's so far—so many dreadful things happen—good-day, ma'am."

Trembling, she snatched up her shabby reticule and fled. I watched her go, her curly head bent, her long starched skirts brushing through the weeds. And I knew by that trembling flight that all her senseless, merciless mother-terrors were lashing her on.

Lucia Cabell, our eldest, made apology.

"She was right sorry to go, Miss Lyman. But her husband is dead, and she's always so fretty about her children. It's hard for her, too. The school is so far for the little ones, and our trustees won't build, bad's we need it. They say it costs too much. Then her taxes are heavy, too. It's hard for a woman alone."

"I see."

Elizabeth Lyman looked at us a long minute. Her face grew bitter with scorn.

"So you, you cherished women, do not care for a man's weapons. Your own man will fight for you. But yonder goes one of the lonely souls who must be man and woman, father and mother. And you will deny her the right to work toward bringing the school to her children. You will hold her hands from helping to build the laws that shall shield her babies, that shall save their tiny heritage. Oh, will you never waken? Will you never look past your own warm sunlit lives into the cloud, the night, where they walk, your sisters, alone?"

We looked at each other furtively. We felt foolish and ill at ease. It was outlandish that this dignified woman should rant at us like any play-actor. I told Frederic so, that night, across our supper-table. But Frederic looked back at me, a little sober.

"Well, I don't know, dear." He stooped and hoisted little sleepy, sticky Charles Edward into his arms. The firelight shone on his grave, clear-cut face, his pondering eyes. "Maybe she was right. Life is too hard on the woman that's left alone. If I thought——"

Then I mind how his face grew dark, as if some vast strange shadow drifted by. "If I thought that would ever happen to you, my girl——"

I wouldn't let him say it. I didn't dare. I jumped up and kissed him and scolded him and plagued him till he looked sheepish enough. But not a year after, I'd waken sobbing in my sleep, and wonder if Frederic had known. If that shadow on his heart could have foretold how soon, how bitterly soon, it was to be. . . . That I, like little Miranda, must put away my joy, and with all my woe and all my mother-terrors clamoring in my breast I must walk that desolate road, alone!

I wrenched my mind from that black groove. So many years ago. . . . But there are scars that all the years of our interminable women's lives can never heal.

I looked around the wide brilliant hall. Mrs. Sands was just closing her address, a crisp, gay challenge. Peter, level eyes half-shut, sat in bored patience. Then came a ripple of applause. Margaretta Bogardus, brawny, apple-cheeked, strode beaming to the front. I looked sharply at Peter. You never can tell.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Gee, this is slow," grieved Peter. He slumped forlornly in his chair. "S'pose you haven't a cocktail in your carriage-bag, granny?"

I didn't have a cocktail, but I did have a peppermint, which I smuggled into Peter's hand, much as I used to smuggle peppermints into Peter's father's little fat paw when the church-pew grew too hot and squirmy to endure. And I felt very kindly toward Margaretta Bogardus. But as she strode beaming off, Peter grasped my arm. His eyes blazed into mine.

"Granny! Look! Quick!"

Up the platform came a little, slender, fair girl in convent-gray. Her amber-gold hair was parted and wreathed in thick, soft braids around her little head. Beneath those golden bands her white small face shone grave and sweet, with the clear gravity of a child. On that great stage she seemed as blossom-frail, as slight, as an anemone in the wind. Yet she moved with a lovely stateliness, and she held her head like a girl-queen.

From behind came a breeze of whispers.

"Miss Millicent Hamilton, you know. That wonderful young English girl . . . perfect devotee of the cause. . . . Yes, isn't she just like a little flower! And those eyes! Like gray stars——"

I looked at Peter.

Peter sat rigid as a statue of steel. His face was perfectly white. His iron fingers gripped along his chair. He hardly breathed. Peter's whole soul was fixed on that little fair face. His eyes clung burning on those gray, clear, burning eyes.

The girl was speaking now. Through that great hall her voice rose bell-like, strangely stern. Here was no airy logic, no bumptious gayety. For she was a throw-back, if ever there was one. All the hot urging will of the old leaders was upon her. All their bold commanding spirit flared out high and keen. And her last words rang on my ear with a piercing thrill.

"Listen. If you women of fortune, you who know leisure and comfort and ease, will not lift your hand to widen your own lives, yet will you not lift your hand for the other woman? Though you yourselves cannot feel the harshness of the unshielded life, can you not know what the other woman feels? The woman who makes her own way, who faces pain and poverty and defeat. The woman who walks alone."

In that hush I turned to Peter.

Peter's dark face was luminous. His big hand clutched shaking on my own.

"Oh, wasn't she glorious! Hasn't she got 'em all lashed to the mast, though! And what she says is not just for suffrage, granny. To remember the other fellow, to give him a show—it strikes home everywhere. It's the whole thing."

"Yes." I looked at my grandson's tense, glowing face. And I felt a queer exultant thrill of fellowship with this hurtling younger generation, these lordly young charioteers, who, even in the flushed triumph of their race, can turn to share their triumph with the other fellow. "Yes, Peter. It's the whole thing."

We rose and were swept into the crowd. Suddenly Peter bent and spoke in a whisper.

"Granny! She—she's coming this way. Oh, granny, listen. Mayn't I bring her up and present her? And—oh, granny, won't you hop down off your perch and honey up to her? You're a good mixer. You know you are. I'll do anything, anything——"

"Hurry, Peter! She's almost at the door."

Miss Hamilton stood before me, docile, serene. She listened to my praises with aloof calm. She had not a lift of her lashes for poor Peter, hovering near. She was beautiful in her reverence to my gray hairs. But it was to old age, mind you; never my grandson's grandmother. I purred and I beamed.

"I must hear you speak again, Miss Hamilton. I shall give myself the pleasure of attending all your meetings."

"Thank you." Again that frosty little obeisance.

"And may I send you my card? Will you spend an afternoon with me?" Oh, I knew I was plastering on my hospitality. But Peter's black eyes were entreating me above that yellow head. And his supplicating grip still ached on my arm.

With decorous gratitude she spoke her thanks. She did not promise to come. She bowed and turned to go. I caught Peter's eye. That piteous appeal carried me past all bounds.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"And—it is quite damp to-night. May I take you home in my car?"

This was too much. Miss Hamilton put the intrusive old lady in her place, gently but with despatch. She thanked Mrs. Wentworth. She begged to wish her a pleasant evening. Cold and sweet as a March anemone she went away.

Peter's crestfallen eyes followed that regal little head.

"Was I too urgent, Peter, dear?"

"Too urgent? Granny, you duck! You got my wireless every time. And you played up to beat the band. No. She's always like that. Just as gracious and approachable as a ladylike young iceberg. In the whole three months since she came to America——"

"Three months! Have you known her so long?"

"Yes. Feels like three centuries at that. Met her at one of the Settlement's Saturday-night dances. Went dippy the first glimpse. I've been under foot ever since. Has she noticed me? No more than any other door-mat. And I—oh, granny, I just worship her. Sometimes it's all I can do not to knock in her silly head. And throw her over my shoulder. And run."

We were back in the limousine. Peter's mighty arm was gripping me tight. Peter's black head was close to my cheek. I twisted one hand loose and I pulled.

Peter's head came down on my bony little shoulder with a thud and a smothered gulp.

"I'd like to shake her soundly myself," said I, with gloom. It is sad to own that my first impulse was to avenge that gulp. And my second was to follow up that little proud aloof figure and take her small unwilling hand and beg her to go with me. I am a very old woman and, very like, a sentimental one. But it has been my privilege to know many lovely and gracious spirits, and even my dim old eyes could not mistake the pure courage of that lifted face, the sweetness of that brave young mouth.

"Never you mind, Peter precious," said I, cuddling the young behemoth much as if Peter had been seven and Miss Millicent Hamilton a far and radiant red engine on the toyshop shelf. "Just you trust grandmother. Grandmother will see!"

"You won't cheep, granny?"

"Not one cheep."

But I promised in the dismal conviction that Peter's secret was written on his face. Too true. Not a week and I was summoned to a distraught parental council.

"What's all this nonsense about Peter, mother?" Thus Charles Edward, harassed and anxious-eyed.

"What about Peter?"

"Why, this young English girl that the boy is so mad over. A Socialist agitator, or some such clap-trap. Peter tells me you met her and admired her. Swears he'll marry her. Though he admits she won't look at him——"

"Admits it? He glories in it!" wailed poor Gwendolen. "He says she's so far above him, he doesn't dare to hope. He says she's the most beautiful woman the world has ever seen, and the sweetest, and the wisest. He says she's an angel—and she a suffragette!"

"Tears will spot that velvet, Gwendolen," said I. "Yes, she's a suffragette. A very good speaker, too."

"Horrid, underbred creature! How can you speak so calmly, mother! Where did she come from, anyway?"

"The Countess of Radleigh brought her over, I hear."

"The Countess of Radleigh?"

"Yes. They met at Cowes——"

"Where?"

"At the cup races. Miss Hamilton is Lady Carmichael's grandniece. She is an orphan, so she makes her home for the most part with Lady Carmichael. She was staying aboard her yacht at the time."

"Oh!" Gwendolen wiped her eyes reflectively. "I suppose— Perhaps Isabel and I ought to call."

"I dare say you might. But I doubt if she returns it. Englishwomen of her class view us as amusing aborigines, you know. That's why she's so indifferent toward Peter."

"'Indifferent!'" Gwendolen went to outraged fragments once more. "Indifferent to *Peter!* Think of it! The snobbish little simpleton! Oh, mother, you don't know how terrible it is. To think that my son, my own darling boy, loves another woman!"

"Yes, Gwendolen. I know."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

H'm. Didn't I cry for three solid days when Charles Edward fell in love with Gwendolen?

"Of course, if she's the right girl"—Charles Edward came in wearily. "I'd rather see him take a wife in his own country. However, I'd be glad to see Peter settled. If you'll just get a line on her, mother——"

"But *I* sha'n't be glad!" sobbed Gwendolen. "I won't give Peter up to anybody. Oh, mother, Peter is so ridiculously fond of you! If you'd just reason with him——"

Well! I fled that mournful conclave, feeling more thankful than ever that I had a home of my own to flee to. To walk into its peaceful silence after that tempest-hour was like land after stormy seas.

Eliza brought my tea to my west balcony. I sat where I could look in on the crayon portrait of Frederic that hangs above my piano. It's an unspeakably awful daub, but Charles Edward had it "enlarged" for me with the first ten dollars he ever earned, and I love every smoochy inch.

"On my word, Frederic, I see no way out," said I. "Charles Edward can be won over. He wants Peter's marriage to be happy. Gwendolen is already won. She wants Peter's marriage to be smart. But Millicent herself, the little cold, imperial thing! I dare say she has a string of heirs apparent dangling this minute. What chance has our poor stodgy Peter, pray?"

Frederic looked sympathetic. But sympathy is not encouragement.

"The old ways are changed, indeed," I thought. "In my day, if a young gentleman honored us with his regard, we did not prance gayly forth and snatch him from the parent stem, like Margaretta Bogardus. Neither did we spurn him like dust beneath our feet. Instead, we behaved with maidenly reserve——"

I stole a guilty peep at Frederic. There was a twinkle in his eye.

"Oh, well, leave it to time," I said hastily. I felt myself turning pink. "Time brings all."

Time brought nothing. In March I went to my Asheville place and left Peter still enacting the pensive door-mat. I had done my best. I had not stopped with mere overtures to Miss Millicent. As Peter sadly owned, I had played the whole blooming symphony. I had sat through her speeches; I had sent her books; I had even lured her, a reluctant little guest of honor, to one or two dinners. She was as cold, as remote, as any princess in her tower. Yet once my chance question brought a shy allusion to her girlhood; an iridescent glint or so of the years spent in her grandaunt's house; the sumptuous background of that life, that broad many-colored tapestry of society, art, finance, world-politics, royal sports; the careless, fitful kindnesses showered upon her, the spasmodic interest, the streaky affection. Then, flashing gold, her own swift awakening, that past this world of opulent content there lay another world, where women older than her white-haired grandaunt sat fumbling over their needles in icy basements, where girls younger than she must walk the black streets, for all their slaving toil would not earn their bread. And then the passion of her, the fire, the pleading! I looked, and I marvelled that all that pity, all that courage, all that boundless heart for service, could lie within that little frail shape of rose and snow. Yes, it is different to-day. When I was a girl we were taught never to show our feelings. Emotion was a thing to shun. But oh, this young generation that shouts its defiance from the house-tops, that dares leap down into the trench and fight shoulder to shoulder! How it can brand our prudent old counsels with shame!

No. I did not gain one inch for Peter. And to my keen old eyes, as well as to Peter's blind enchanted young ones, she grew every day lovelier, more desirable, and farther, higher on the toyshop shelf.

"Nothing doing, granny." Thus Peter, a gaunt, disheartened Peter, when I returned. "Guess I don't qualify, that's all. She's put in the whole solid season, working for the League. I've occupied the same period, trying to make a dent on her field of vision. Nary dent. I'm a mere primrose by the river's brim. Yellow primrose at that. Nary devoirs, either, though I've tried 'em all, from motoring to movies. Just now she's so rapt in the League's final campaign that she doesn't even stumble when she steps on me."

"Has Gwendolen——"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Mother's been a perfect lady. Called on her and fell in love at first sight. Sis spoons all over her. Dad heard her speak, just once. Since then she's had him roped and tied. Sort of runs in the family."

"I know. Don't look so limp, Peter. Maybe——"

Maybe is a poor word to conjure with. As weeks went by, I felt the tug of Peter's misery more and more. When you are young, your children's hurts stab deep. But when you're past seventy, you just can't live and stand it. You have so little time to see them happy in.

Peter came to me again and again. I was his sole outlet, for Charles Edward had gone to California and taken Gwendolen and Isabel with him. With every day he grew more disconsolate. Even the discovery of two new fistic geniuses among his small pagans at the Settlement could give him but a moment's cheer. At last, one dripping raw April evening he banged in, despair incarnate.

"Says she's going back to England the day after the League round-up closes." Peter stood wringing a lace curtain into knots. His dark face was thunderous. "Says she doesn't know whether she'll permit me to come to Surrey or not. Changed her mind three times since Tuesday. Little mutt! For two cents I'd quit grovelling and try a half a brick."

"She speaks to-night. You might try the brick after the meeting," said I.

Darkly musing, Peter put on my cloak. Suddenly he grasped my shoulders and swung me round. His eyes bored deep into my own.

"Listen, granny. Were you ever—in all your life, were you ever such a hopeless, footless loon as I am now?"

I gasped.

"Y—yes, Peter. I was. Once."

"Well. Now, granny, give it to me straight. Was it worth while?"

"Yes, Peter. Ten thousand times worth while."

His hard fingers loosened. His face dropped into lines of steel.

"Thank you, granny. That settles it. Me for the half a brick!"

Peter himself drove my brougham that night. Peter is the most skilful driver I have ever seen. How the calamity ever happened—how that strong, quick-witted boy could make such a hideous blunder, only the Fates can know.

We were crossing Forty-second Street, inch by inch, for there was a tangle of cabs and taxis ahead, an impatient string of trolley-cars behind, and an uncounted throng of foot-passengers everywhere. The traffic officer had just signalled us ahead when through the air tore the fierce siren scream of the hook-and-ladder. I jumped and gasped.

"'Après vous, mon cher Gaston,'" remarked Peter, amused. He backed swiftly against the curb. Twenty other cars were doing the same thing. Not ten feet away a flurried chauffeur, trying to back, lost control. His big car plunged at us headlong.

"Lobster!" hissed Peter. With a roar we shot careening across the avenue, barely in time, as the runaway grazed our tires. Then, as Peter swung about to back again, we skidded. Skidded like a cannon ball, straight into that crossing full of hurrying, excited people. Skidded straight for one figure, a little slim figure in gray.

"*Oh,* Lord!"

We crashed back against the curb. Peter crashed out through the brougham door. Sick with terror, I stared at that little prostrate shape. In the flaring light I saw that white, small face, that braided amber hair.

Then I came to my wits. I sprang out and caught Millicent from Peter's arms and commanded the traffic man to help me carry her to my car. Between an unconscious girl, a maniac grandson, and a disabled automobile, it was an agitating fifteen minutes. When, at last, we had laid Millicent on the divan in my own room, where she looked, the darling, like a lovely little girl asleep; when my shaking old hands had felt her all over and found no broken bones; when, after untold ages, she had lifted those silken lashes and given us a faint reassuring smile—then Peter and I sat down with one accord and put our arms around each other and cried like two children. Then——

"Oh, my dear, my dear! You must not dream of it!"

"But assuredly, Mrs. Wentworth. My speech comes the last of all. They are

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

depending upon me. I must go at once. Is my gown quite tidy, please?"

Go she did, the little wretch. Always smiling, always frosty-sweet, she said good-night and went away, a wabbly little anemone, her face whiter than chalk, and a blue bump on the back of her stubborn head the size of a door-knob. Peter went with her, hovering by like a panic-smitten Shanghai hen. I stayed at home. Somehow I didn't care for further amusement that night. I was not unprepared for Peter's hopeless face the next day.

"Talk about half a brick! When knocking her down with a sixty-horse-power car didn't make any impression! Yes, I put it up to her, granny. I couldn't wait any longer. And she went the astounding length of saying that she valued me as a friend. Say, granny, if I bring you that half a brick, will you sew it up in a pillow-case for me? Then I'll tie it round my neck. And pike up to the ferry slip. And jump in."

For all her inhuman treatment of Peter, Millicent quite softened toward me. She even came, at my supplication, and stayed a week. That time was a delight. Hour by hour, I saw deeper into that earnest young heart, that white young spirit. And being a very old woman, and a shamelessly sentimental one, I began to plot and to scheme. But all my plans slid through the sieve of the Danaïdes. For only the high Fates could have entwined that flawless web.

First, like a bolt from the pale spring sky, came a volley of cablegrams from Orizco, Brazil. Then two commanding detonations from Charles Edward at Pasadena. Up to my door rushed Peter, his hands full of yellow envelopes, dismayed, aghast, exultant.

"Granny! Look at all this! That pin-headed supervising engineer of ours has bilged on his concrete work! That big government bridge, you know. Been sneaking in inferior iron and pocketing the difference. The purp! Of course, the whole Committee of Inspection is down on us like a falling house. Father wires me, 'Go down at once. Take full charge'——do you get *that!*" He swelled. "Me for the spot-light! Can't you see your Peter in a frock-coat, doing the chesty-cordial to all those peeved tan-colored potentates? Wasn't it corking of dad to send me, though! B—but——"

Then all that upblown glory vanished. He stared at me with desperate eyes.

"But—Millicent! Father wants me to sail at five to-day. On the *Adria*. He wired 'em for my passage. Yet—this very day! I'll have to stay in Brazil six months. More likely a year. Long before I come back Millicent will be off and away. I'll never have another chance. Never in this world."

We looked at each other miserably.

"Listen, granny. The *Irenaic* sails Saturday morning. Would I be a cheat if I stayed over? Would dad think——"

"Is the bridge-work stopped, Peter?"

"Stopped dead. Certain sure."

"Then two days can't make nor break that bridge. But two days may—oh, hurry and cancel your passage, Peter. Run!"

From my aerie balcony I watched his car whirl away. I drew a breath of relief. For Millicent was coming to luncheon. And it was close on the hour.

Millicent came. She was a little silent to-day, a little grave and pale. I watched her. And while I meditated, the Fates came by, amused, benign, and let me weave a corner of their web with my own daring old hands.

"My grandson, Peter, had just left the house when you came."

"Ah?" languidly interested.

"Yes. He was in a great hurry. He is going away."

"Really!" Not quite so languid now.

I hardened my sinful old heart.

"Yes. At five to-day. His father wired for his passage. To South America. For a year."

"At five o'clock! A year!"

I looked up quickly.

Millicent's gray eyes were wide and dark. Every trace of color had vanished from her face. She stood up, trembling from head to foot. Then without another word she wilted into a little soft heap.

I do not care to dwell on the time that followed. It was thirty terrible minutes before Eliza and I could coax back even a flicker of life to that little white wrist. When at last I knew that Peter's grandmother had not murdered Peter's sweetheart I wilted too, and Eliza put me to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bed with much more petting than my evil courses deserved.

At six o'clock Eliza brought my tea.

"How is Miss Millicent, Eliza?"

"Miss Millicent would get up, ma'am. Though she looks like wax. Sitting on the balcony in the twilight, she is, this half-hour."

I put down my cup. One might as well dip deep in perfidy.

"Thank you, Eliza. Give me the telephone, please.

"Is that you, Peter, dear?"

"Yes. I want you. At once. You can make it in eight minutes? No, nothing has happened. Not yet. Don't ring, Peter. Let yourself in with your key. Go directly to the little west balcony. And then, if you can't do the rest for yourself—if you ask me one more silly question, I'll box your ears."

I lay and quaked till I heard Peter's step. Then I lay and quaked some more.

After hours and hours I must have forgotten and stopped quaking; for I was aware of a gleam in my room, like the first light of dawn. Then a cheek like an anemone to mine, and two clinging arms, and a wild young heart beating against my own.

"Oh, you darling traitor! Oh, you knew, you knew!" That sobbing rapturous whisper! "And will you try and love me, too? Just a very, very little, granny?"

"I'll make an effort," I whispered back, very softly, for fear I'd break the crystal of the miracle. For it seemed to me that I was holding all my own youth in my old arms. And all its joy, and all its misty dreams.

The next day flashed by in diamond moments. But Peter must tear himself away that afternoon for a flying trip to Boston, and Millicent went still earlier, to work like a little Turk at the League Bazaar. I, elate conspirator, had one more thread to weave in my secret web.

"When do you return, Peter?"

"Five sharp, Thursday. At five-eight, I'll be up here to hug you two girls. Both at once."

"Five? That is very convenient. The Reverend Doctor Pennington is coming to call. He will be glad to see you."

"*What!*"

"The Reverend Doctor Pennington. He will expect——"

"Aw, granny! Keep him in here and let Millicent and me have the library. Think, only two days more with my girl. Then a solid year without her!"

"Doctor Pennington is your spiritual adviser, Peter. In Charles Edward's absence he stands almost *in loco parentis*."

Peter kicked the rug and muttered something unseemly, not to say impious.

"Moreover," then I took the young dolt firmly by the ear and unrolled my web. "Moreover, Millicent's work for the League ends Thursday night. But her great-aunt is shooting tigers in Upper Burma, so the child will spend a very lonely spring. Moreover, I'm told that Orizco is really quite a civilized——"

"Granny!"

From Peter's lips issued a volcanic gasp. A light of almost human intelligence flamed across his face.

"Granny!" It was a gulp of pure ecstasy. "Granny, I always said you were a pippin, a peach. But, granny, you—you dead game old sport!"

He swooped down, caught me out of my chair, kissed me violently in one eye, then hurled me back in my chair and fled. His parting whoop of delight rang down the corridors.

I sat there feeling scared and shamed and triumphant, all in a breath. One minute, and Peter came racing back again.

"Say, but granny!" He was frowning and intent. "You—you know Millicent ought to have things. Oh, I'm a softy, all right. But—I wish she could wear your wedding dress, granny. She'd love it, I know."

"But I wore it for best for only twelve years after we were married, Peter. It was made over three times. It's a silk quilt now. Besides, it was hung in triple flounces. Each flounce was eight yards around. That's twenty-four feet. Have you any idea how a twenty-four-foot gown would look to-day, Peter?"

"I suppose it might look out of date," Peter agreed reluctantly. Then his hard young mouth twitched. A slow abashed crimson burned to his thatched black hair.

"Listen, granny. Won't you sprint downtown and blow yourself on some war paint and feathers for her? Then tell her

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it's your own present to her, see? Go as far as you like, and then some. I'll square up later. Get her a flossy white dress, and some swell hats, and all the flub-dubs. I want her to have the whole works, don't you see? Before—" He swallowed hard. "Well—she hasn't any money of her own, you know. Just the tiny allowance her grandaunt gives her. I don't want her to feel as if—as if she'd *stepped down*, taking me. You savez?"

I looked up at Frederic's portrait. Didn't I always say that Peter should have been named for Frederic? I swallowed hard, too.

"I see, Peter. I'll do my very best. A good travelling suit, and some pretty dinner gowns, and so on. Just leave it to me."

Peter eyed me a minute. Then he spoke out. And he gave me the most exquisite compliment that the heart of any flatterer man since Adam has ever put into words.

"You may take it from me, Mrs. Frederic D. Wentworth," he spoke with slow finality, "my reverend grandfather had to step lively to get you. That's a cinch. And that's all."

Whereat I cuffed him severely and sent him away. I did not look at Frederic's portrait again. It made me feel too deceiving. When I remember—but why shatter Peter's illusions?

Oh, that orgy of shopping! I haven't known such pure delight, such a sense of wealth and grandeur, since that April morning in '61, when Frederic and I went to town to expend my hoarded forty-five dollars on my wedding outfit, clothes, shoes, and all, and squandered every copper of that forty-five dollars on one celestial lilac bonnet instead. And late that afternoon came Millicent, tired, but radiant.

"You sent for me? But I mustn't stay, granny, dear. There is so much to do at the Bazaar. Think, it comes Thursday night and this is Wednesday!"

"I know. But there is a great deal to do here. Look."

Then her eyes fell on the heap of cobweb on the bed.

"Why, granny——"

"I'll have to keep you right here." My arms were around her now, my cheek to that little startled face. "For you and Peter will be married to-morrow. And sail for South America on Saturday. And, Millicent, this is your wedding-dress. Haven't you time to look it over, dear?"

Ah, well. Even the noblest, sternest toiler of that sisterhood must turn aside to look on her own wedding-gown!

Thursday came, still and rare, all dim spring sunshine and winds that told of violets. At five o'clock came the Reverend Doctor Pennington. At five-thirty came Peter, glorious as a young emperor, though whiter than the gardenia in his coat. As the chimes rang six, I stood and looked on my children and knew them mine no longer. For now they were each other's, for all the worlds to come.

Then Millicent was in my arms again. But her deep eyes shone past me and clung to Peter's watching eyes. And her lovely face turned white as pearl, then rose-pink, as an anemone flushes when you turn it to the wind.

"Oh, granny!" Her whisper trembled close. "Isn't he splendid? Isn't he wonderful?"

"To be sure, you blessed lamb," said I. "They always are."

"You're staying with me a little longer, children?"

"We ought to help at the League a while, granny. The Bazaar comes to-night, you know."

"Well. I should think that on the very evening of your wedding you might be excused."

"But we promised. They need all the help they can get, dear. I'm to sell 'Votes for Women,' and Peter is to be barker for the Old Masters' Booth."

"Barker?"

"Yes. Spieler, granny. Puller-in."

"Oh! But afterward?"

Two faces turned to me, blank.

"I hadn't thought," muttered Peter helplessly. "I didn't half believe you could put it across, granny."

"Thinking you might be somewhat absent-minded, Peter, I telephoned to Irvington and told Bracken to have the house in readiness for you. Go up in my car after the fair. Please do not hug me both at once."

Of all the preposterous doings! To go straight back to that uproarious Bazaar

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and work all evening! Just because they had given their promise! The ways of today are different, indeed. In my time it was thought most improper for a bride to appear in public from the day of her wedding until the following Sabbath. Then she would trail forth demurely, to bewitch us all with her most ravishing finery. Yet I had heard them with a strange splendid pride. The old order changes. But the old steadfastness and faith, the loyal heart of service, will never change. And that is well.

It was late twilight. I crept out on my balcony to watch my children as far as my eyes could see. We who are old will go drifting back. . . . It was more than fifty years ago that Frederic and I stood up before the hearth in my father's cabin, while a gentle old circuit-rider made us man and wife. Like Peter and Millicent, we had a simple wedding. No guests, no bridesmaids, no attendants, only my youngest step-brother, little tow-headed Thomas. He was very sulky and jealous at Frederic, the little dear, and he held tight to my hand and stuck his tongue out at Frederic, all through the ceremony. Then at moonrise we climbed into our own wagon and drove away, up through the beech woods to our own cabin. It was June and the trees were thick-leaved and dusky-silver, so that the road was paved with dancing shadows, and the wild honeysuckle floated out to us, magic-sweet, and the smell of the dew-wet fields and the young corn was sweeter still. And all the winds of romance blew to us through those shadowy aisles as we went up that dim white road of dream.

Yet, as I caught my last glimpse of Millicent's little gray figure, of Peter's imperial pride, I knew that all those high, clear winds were calling in their ears. And I knew that that mystic cry would echo still, while Millicent sold "Votes for Women," and Peter barked dutifully at the Booth of Old Masters. And past the crash of the orchestra they would hear the blackbird's whistle, the sigh of the breeze in the pines. And the flag-draped walls would be as the dark beech forest, climbing its moonlit hills. And the faces that crowded round them would be no more than the shadows that frolicked in the young corn. For they would walk through that shouldering crowd, alone with the stars and the wind and the dream.

Then I looked back. Above me, in the dusk, hung Frederic's dauby crayon. But Frederic's own smile gleamed down to me from the dull canvas. And then, in the midst of my joy, a great wild terror and pity leaped in my heart. And all my memories rose dark before my eyes. And I began to plead, trembling.

"Oh, let them have what we two had, what we two knew! Let them know happiness together. Let them know weariness, and failure, and grief. Give them what we two were given, work and laughter, tears and contentment. Give them——"

Then I looked again at that pictured face. The comrade of my youth, my man, my beloved, so long, so long away. And my heart broke within me with one prayer, one cry.

"Oh, give them what we were not given! Give them what we were denied! They have shown compassion. They have spent of their youth for others' needs. Show compassion upon them. Let it not be that one of them shall know the lonely road. Mercifully vouchsafe that they may grow old—together!"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AN ENGLISH WRITER'S NOTES ON ENGLAND

BY VERNON LEE

THINGS OF THE PAST

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HOWARD GILES

OXFORD WITH A FOREIGNER

IN order to understand England, one ought to explain, to try and show it, to a foreigner. Only, of course, one couldn't. This idea haunts me every time I write to a French or Italian or German friend from England; it has formulated itself in my mind while showing Madame de Ch—— over Oxford. I don't suppose I was able to make her see the *hang* of the various things, their significance in the past and the present; but trying to do so, I felt I was getting some sort of idea of it myself. For Oxford is astonishingly significant, explanatory, of one whole side at least, of English character and life.

Of course Oxford explains England because you need England to explain Oxford. A place like Knole, for instance, with its brocaded and tapestried *King's Room*, its great grass avenue, the bits of oak wood with deer (even a white, legendary looking stag!) framed in between the window mullions, its whole orderly romance and unostentatious magnificence explains, for instance, such a college as Magdalen. It is, indeed, Magdalen College transported into the heart of Kent; or, rather, an Oxford College is merely the great English manor-house transported by its magnificent founders from the country into the suburbs of a walled mediæval town. Oxford Colleges are a series of monastic cells (like the little dwelling-places composing a Carthusian monastery), where poor clients and sons of retainers or the needier cadets of great families could study, tacked on to an establishment similar to that from which the great lord, or king, or cardinal, himself jousted or hunted. The dining-halls, one feels, were really meant for pages and men-at-arms, not for dons and scholars. And at Magdalen there is actually the deer-park, ready to hunt in.

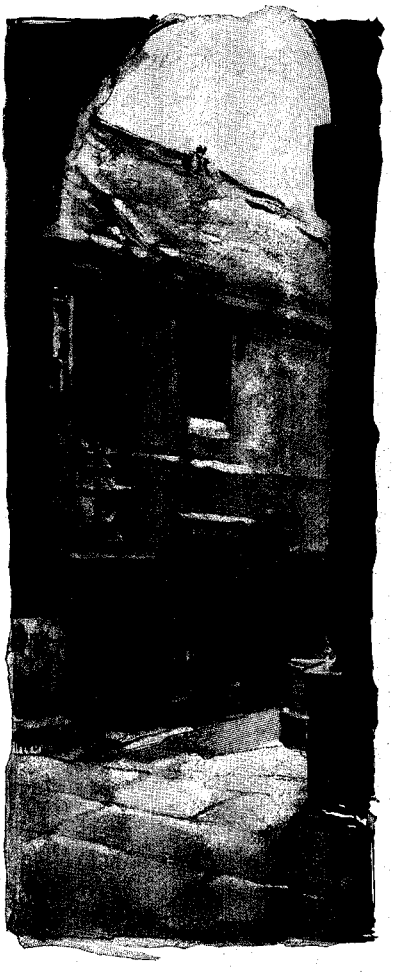
Corresponding to this are the college splendors; the wonderful plate, for instance, at Jesus College, which I naturally had exhibited to the utterly puzzled eyes of my French friend, wondering what such things could have to do with educational arrangements: a punch-bowl, for instance, given in the early eighteenth century by a Sir W. W. Wynn; a punch-bowl as large as a small bath, silver-gilt, with spoon all of one piece, of the size of the largest cup; beautiful, enormous tankards of most delicate hinge and handle decoration. Such household details, the perfection of plate, of panelling and wainscoting designs of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, seem to answer to that aristocratic domestic quality which comes but in the earlier English bird-cage perpendicular architecture, as of colleges and manor-houses.

Then I took my French lady over some college gardens; in one of them we could hear the voices of choristers from the neighboring college chapel. Across the back of the gabled college and its buttressed hall a great cedar stretches, its few branches like blackish ostrich feathers against the vivid green of the carefully mowed and rolled grass. There was a twitter of birds and a smell of sun-warmed cedar wood; and those dead-in-tune, unaccentuated anthems and responses from the chapel completed the impression of decorous leisure. There is, to me, always a little flat and insipid about this exquisite, swept and garnished old England of privilege and tradition, just as there is apt to be something as of desolation and *garlicky* horror about the picturesqueness of Italy. The beauty and suggestiveness of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

England is a little like the voices of those college choirs: it is overwhite, lacking light and shade, a trifle sugary at times, and inhumanly warbling in timbre.

Then, somehow, we got to the University Museum of Casts; the halls full of blunt, blurred plaster gods and heroes, their surface thickened with paint or oil and patched with inevitable planes of soot. This is what scholarly institutions have made of all Greek things: Antiquity broken and stained and damaged inevitably; but which might at least have been stained and broken like the figures which have remained on the Parthenon, or the statues in the groves of Roman villas, made almost into organic things by the mere action of the centuries. But soot and dust and caster's seams in a museum! Is not Oxford a centre of classical teaching, of what are called the Humanities?



Where poor clients and sons of retainers or the needier cadets of great families could study.—Page 177.

Then we went to the top of the Sheldonian, and I showed Madame de Ch—— the view on old roofs (purple slate, orange tile, green lead) among the great tree-tufts; towers and steeples set all round, and the incredible little forest of fronded pinnacles; and, rising sheer beyond it all, the bright green hill-sides, dotted with toy-looking white-and-red houses, so small among their big trees and hedges. I wondered whether my French friend felt the charm and oddity of this picture-book (Walter Crane!) view, so dapper, unlikely, exquisite, venerable, and at the same time somehow childish; so utterly without the haggard, tragic quality of similar tower-views in Latin countries, say that of Venice from the belfry of Santa Maria dell' Orto; nothing, in this Oxford view, of the etching; something almost Japanese in the neatness of the details, the bright, clean simplicity of the washes of color.

"Qu'est-ce qu'on leur enseigne?" suddenly inquired my French friend, fixing her long-handled eyeglass on the inscriptions over the Gothic doors of the Schools. "Schola Theologiæ," "Schola Metaphysicæ," "Schola Musicæ." She evidently couldn't take these as an adequate answer. But I found it difficult to furnish one on the spur of the moment, so we went on to the hall where the vice-chancellor thrones above the oaken stalls and benches of the other dignitaries; with, alongside, the little tribunal with oaken dock where undergraduates are tried.

"What a different thing an Englishman must become," mused my friend; "being brought up among all these things, all these marks of Old-World privilege, tradition, and Old-World decorum and refinement." But she evidently couldn't understand how in the world all those things still came to be there, and a young modern, the son of modern bourgeois, brought up among them all.

I wish I could have shown Madame de Ch—— Ewelme, to which I was myself taken for the first time only a few days later. It made *me* understand Oxford, and indeed England, a little better, through a series of feelings of surprise, of mingled delight, amusement, and the respect one has before anything very old, traditional, un-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Towers and steeples set all round, and the incredible little forest of fronded pinnacles.—Page 178.

reasoned, every instance of the world's automatic, unlogical ways. First there was the surprise, having left the motor at the door of a flowery little inn, of finding, on the road, a two-storeyed Gothic house, brick with black corners, and fine carved stone windows and big coats-of-arms held by angels; and issuing from this unlikely place the voices of school children at their lessons. It was founded—by a daughter or niece of Chaucer—to be a school; and a school, with the little girls' hats and umbrellas hanging in the hall, it still is. Such a gradual transformation (as distinguished from the phenomenon of stagnation shown by a convent which still is a convent) of a thing keeping its original use, but adapting it, is possible only in this most conservative, because originally most modern, of countries. Behind the school, uphill, among gardens, is the almshouse, with a cloister where the old people keep their flowers; and at the top, sunk into the little hill among the limes and elms, like a sitting hen, is the beautiful church where lies, carved in alabaster, the great lady who founded the whole place: Alicia ducissa (of Suffolk) under a carved canopy, with angels and saints. But as if these were not state enough she has lying like a great crown above her head another canopy still, and little angels holding her pillow. These angels are different from any I have ever seen, not draped, but feathered, their very feminine limbs covered with tight-fitting scales of plumes and long-feathered wings; little coat-tails of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

feather growing out of their hips in addition to those from their shoulders. They lie caressingly round the lady's pillow, their sweet women's faces and delicate bare feet close to her head. Such would have been Titania and her crew—bird women, no bigger than one's hand or than a thrush. Underneath lies, already as in French Renaissance work, but decently hidden in darkness, a half-fleshed corpse—Aliciæ (ducissæ), no doubt.

From the churchyard limes you look over the little brick village embowered in orchards and a spur of the Chilterns, pale grass and juniper.

The Regius Professor of Medicine, at this moment an American, has the gift of this church and the charge of this almshouse.

"Schola Metaphysicæ." These marks of Old-World privilege.—Page 178.

A COUNTRY TOWN

Abingdon—dear little, as M. says, "Falstaffian" town of small pink-and-red gabled houses, not without a sprinkling of small Georgian ones with Grecian porches—attorney's or doctor's once, no doubt, the "town-residence" of the gentry, when the fogs made country houses unendurable and brought a desire for company and cards. This little town is only two long-crossing streets, like a village, fields immediately behind, willows and water visible through open house doors.

The Bridge—the grassy, sedgy Thames between vivid lawns, with cricket and merry-go-rounds; that holiday-looking English river-life, fitly framing this sleepy, prosperous town of the past.

The Church with one or two delicate bits of carving, niches, etc., on the outside, and a churchyard like a garden.

And the Almshouses! The Queen Anne ones—orange brick with black corners, flowery little enclosures and a lovely glass roof lantern, vaguely like something off an old sailing ship (or am I thinking of the Venetian galley lanterns?); but is there not often a reminiscence of ships in the charming things—bow windows, sun-dials, weather-vanes, and these specially national Wren lanterns—of English architecture?

The other, older Almshouses, with wooden porch cloisters (inhabited only by magnificent cats, doubtless enchanted former burgesses, those whose portraits in ruffs and furs hang in the council-room). How untouched by time! Materially and morally, what continuity!

In another charming church (perpendicular and like a banqueting-room) they had just put down on to the tomb of a worthy and his wife, of about 1600, forty-eight loaves of white bread to be distributed every Sunday to the poor. These loaves, with their fresh smell, on that tomb, seemed an epitome of this singular conservative country, or rather of England's conservative, traditional side, *polar* to its Black-country newness and devastation.

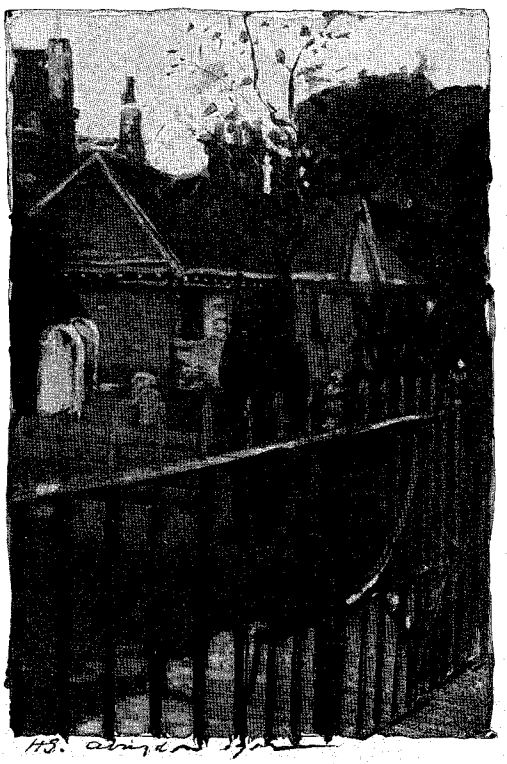
Had tea in a typical inn and drove home among pale fields of oats, bordered with great hemlocks and magnificent green umbels of cow parsley—mists, as in autumn, rising, veiling; and on the road bands of Radley boys, in rowing and bathing clothes,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

walking and bicycling back from the river, sturdy, clean, happy.

A CASTLE IN DEVONSHIRE

This castle, from below, its russet walls and dense green knoll against the sere hillsides and reddening moorland, has none of the fine aggressiveness of similar foreign places; it is merely on the defensive, aloof and melancholy. Walked on the leads, and looking over the battlements, this morning, a sad gray day, suiting it all. The muddy Channel, of delicate rose color under its lilac cloud banks and its opposite lilac shores, but crested with white—wild, yet enclosed with the additional sadness of limitation. Close below, over the great flat cedar tops and yew hedges, the sere park sloping to the moors. And at night, from my window, over the dense trees, enclosed by the projecting towers, a strip of sea, lit by a watery moon.



A churchyard like a garden.—Page 180.

Notice the odd contrast of the southern plants, growing luxuriantly. The great myrtles, flowering magnolias, verbenas, nay even a lemon tree with fruit, spaliered against the castle walls. And round the thatched cottages the same southern growth. And yet, how northern the sea, how bleak the hills!

A long gallery room, out of which opens King Charles's Room, with hiding-place in wall six feet thick. The gallery hung with stamped leather and pictures life-size, Spanish most probably, periwigged Mark Antony impersonated by Charles II, and for asp-stung Cleopatra a Hampton Court blond Catherine of Braganza; colossal bogy figures, bogies for all their sheen of gold and silver, and dints and lines of leather tooling. On stairs and in halls, ladies and effeminate curled cavaliers and powdered beaux; so polite, soft, glib, and pleased with themselves.

From dining-room window, view sheer down, somewhat as of Eton from Windsor Castle—of little town, the Castle always call it town—of D. Straight village street, roseroan road (the stone and soil here is all red, making the muddy sea that charming color and striping the hills brighter than their heather), enclosed by little old houses, sloping upward toward the moor with church and great mediæval circular penthouse of wool market; a little picture such as one looks down on from Dürer's castles.

In the village church very fine and bold carved screens with undercut vine frieze and little conventionalized spruce-fir panels. Here sleep generations of L.'s and M.'s, lords of D. A seneschal of Normandy in plate armor ("one of my people was Seneschal of Honfleur under Henry IV," says mine host, "and wrote for food and wine to D."), with his lady in horned coif;—her little dog has been broken, his face quite obliterated to a mere stone ball. Alabaster, these tombs, from an island up Bristol Channel; lying like a great whale in midwater. Another tomb, late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, an elaborate,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pillared Palladian erection: a bearded man and farthingaled woman stretched out; another woman also lying dead, but by her, her still-living husband, ruffed and cloaked, kneeling in prayer. "I don't like those sort of tombs," remarks Miss L. shyly; "they seem pompous, somehow." But this image of a living man, kneeling among his beloved dead ones, should surely make us forgive all pomposities of architecture and heraldry; at least so it seemed to me. But his descendant shook her head doubtfully. Humility in death for those glorious in life? Nay, why wait for death? We can be humble in life, for all the Domesday books and canopied knightly ancestors, aspire to unnoticed virtues and everyday duties. But perhaps that itself is dignity and heroism; and the praying ancestor in cloak and ruff, kneeling by the dead wife cut out of alabaster, has surely not prayed in vain.

A typical inn.

Speaking at breakfast about the book of family history they had lent me, I happen to say how inconceivable such a book telling of the same family, settled between the same walls for over eight hundred years, would seem to some of my French friends, who do not even know the name of the former occupants of the great mediæval castles of their neighborhood in Touraine, Normandy, or Gascony. "But very soon it will be like that in England," answers the lady of the house quite simply. "Places will have to be sold." Yet they are Liberals, Gladstonians even. It bears out my impression of Old-World and chivalrous humbleness in these people, that one of them, pious and even ritualistic, should mention a certain book, written by a rather aggressive agnostic. "It leaves one with good and liberal thoughts," she says, very simply.

And it seems to me that her knightly ancestors are speaking through her mouth.

Returning lateish, the pinkish sea under mottled, windy sky, the jutting headlands of Minehead toward the Atlantic and the castle: in its nest of leaves, against its long, low moorland slopes, just as in Turner's sketch of it.

A CATHEDRAL TOWN

I have come to this cathedral town for that very characteristically British (or should I say Church-of-England?) solemnity, a "Musical Festival."

Architecturally speaking, and compared with the French Gothic buildings, of which it is but an unskilful adaptation, the cathedral itself is a mere disappointment. But the charm of the place! The discreet picturesqueness, the moderate, gentle romance of this great pile, of all these ins and outs of roan wall, pinnacle and tower, set down in that great lawn of deepest, softest turf screened by those noble, skirted trees, surrounded by those delightful dapper Queen Anne and Georgian houses, with their swept and garnished floweriness. Cows—discreet, ecclesiastical cows—feeding in that enclosed sacerdotal meadow, cut by clean little channels, among old garden walls overtopped by great blackened cedar; the whole enclosed by the Tudor gateways leading into the town. Nay, this swept and garnished place of ease and rest and privilege, encloses even its little view of distant

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sharp chalk down, of distant high-lying beechwood.

Service was going on when I first came on my way from the station, with the usual English prohibition to walk or look about one, the usual necessity of being afterward taken round by the verger; the usual impression of being conducted over God's Mansion by the housekeeper or butler.

On the other hand, the charm of that close, of that bit of park-land hard by the great gray cathedral, where dainty little white-dressed and white-bonneted babies are rolled in their perambulators or dancing round the mulberry bush! What a strange, smooth country of privilege and secure legal possession this England is! The very past becomes a pleasant ornament of gentlemanly privacy.

A beautiful church will become for our fancy . . . the organism which produces great music.
Durham Cathedral.—Page 188.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pending the beginning of the "Festival," preparations for which are making it impossible to see the inside of the cathedral as a whole, I have been studying English history (the genuine history, not the sort one gets in books) in the tombs, which are as numerous and suggestive, though not so glorious, as those in Westminster Abbey, which delighted the fancy of Charles Lamb. Here are a few of them.

First we have John Jones, alderman, "thrice mayor of this city, burgess of the Parliament at the time of the Gunpowder Treason, Registrar to eight several succeeding Bishops of this diocese." This worthy, or at least the upper half of him, is clapped into the wall under a Corinthian entablature: a "King of Spades," with peaky nose, turning-up eyebrows and brushed-up forelock, cheeks painted apple red; dressed in red furred gown and stiff ruff divided by his hard pointed beard, and altogether extraordinarily like some superior barn-door fowl. One skinny hand holds a folded letter; the other, with thumb marking the place, a book. At either corner of the tomb is an elaborate inkstand in relief, pens, pounce, all complete, even to a knife or eraser of odd shape. And, behind each of the black Corinthian columns, in lieu of pilasters, is a series of pigeon-holes, duly docketted 1581–1590, 1600–1610, 1620–1630. Two pigeon-holes remain unlabelled; are their papers perhaps blank, destined to be filled up by the writer in some other life? For round his effigy runs the text: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me: Write." It is true the text continues "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." But one feels that this latter phrase is only, so to speak, so much copy by which the worthy is to show his penmanship, and that, in the face of so much paper, ink, pounce, and red tape, of such grasping of document and book, the real injunction from heaven was limited to the bare fact of writing.

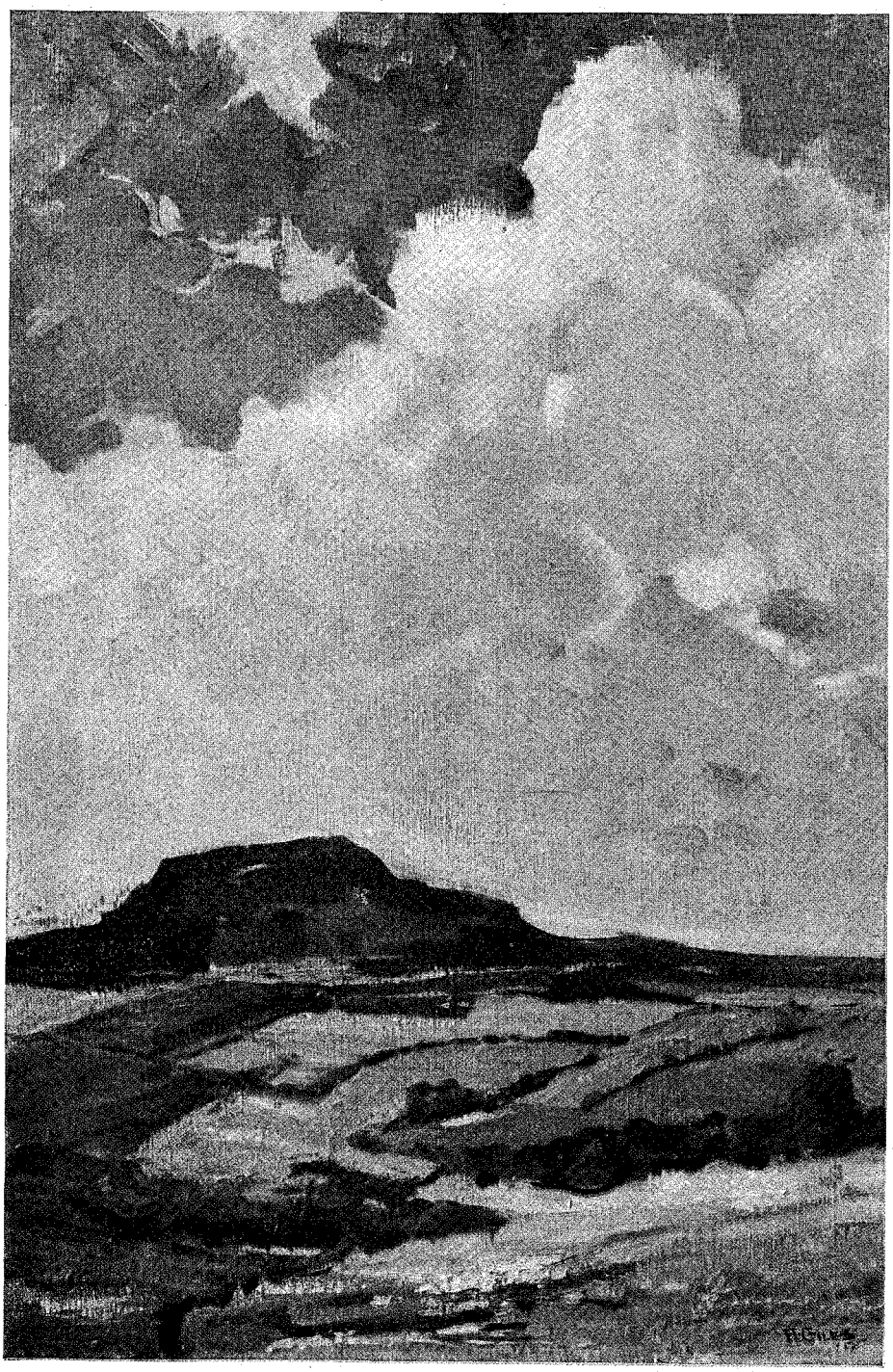
Proceeding, as the guide books have it (and as the verger insists), to the Lady Chapel, I meet a pathetic Mary-Queen-of-Scots'-looking lady, wife of Johannis Williams, *Armiger*, lying in full starched dress, a tiny, weeny hand-swaddled baby by her side. But she stares into space, listlessly holding a book.

Next door a portly Dr. Sacheverel-like court preacher, Johannes Powell. Of two freestone naked cherubs by his side, one clasps a broken column, the other weeps three large stone tears! Opposite a James I ruffed lady, leaning on draped *priedieu*, head on hand, so weary of life and starch, near to faint, and holding her embroidered and gilt-edged handkerchief. Like all old tombstones, these in this cathedral teach us that among this robust British people of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, fecundity is a great fact; hence the many tombs with four, five, six daughters and sons tapering away from the fruitful parents; nay, the two wives with the efficient husband between, flouting Christ's poor remark about the place where there is no marrying nor giving in marriage. In a delicate fifteenth-century chapel out of the Lady Chapel a wooden tablet, inscribed and illustrated in color, with an old graybeard in prayer before an altar, his highly quartered coat-of-arms alongside, states that Thomas Fitzwilliam, Esq., not only had six children himself, but his son-in-law had twenty-one by two wives, although the daughter of Thomas Fitzwilliam only contributed part, being the second wife; still the connection was evidently honorable.

Among all this self-sufficient prose of the past, one is startled, as by a ghost, by the tomb of the Murdered King. Its elaborate thorn-carved canopy and railing make it into a veritable shrine, part of which is a small table or ledge for the pious to place their offerings upon—wax lights, no doubt, and flowers. The hero of Marlowe's play looks indeed a sort of royal flower, untimely cut, like Shakespeare's Richard II: a beautiful, young, barely bearded person in *quasi*-feminine robes, infinitely feeble, and very decent and dignified, for once, in death. One understands that the brutal end of such a helpless creature should have turned him, in people's imagination, into an emblem of suffering legitimacy, almost sanctity. So reverent and tender is the rebound of horror, the second phase of wrathful contempt.

Compared with any Continental church, how utterly undemocratic is such a cathedral! How utterly is the poor man excluded, how utterly the private prayer proscribed! This cathedral, divided by a dozen iron rails, where the congregation may not penetrate, save on payment, beyond the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

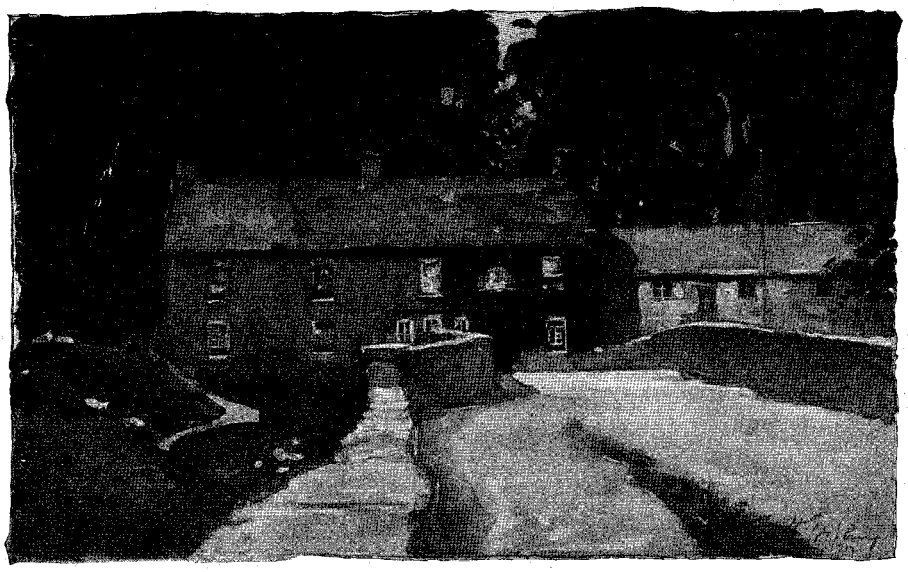


How these little valleys of the Cotswolds make one understand what was meant by Merry England!—Page 192.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nave; where the dean has a private pew, with a carpet and mirror, like the dressing-room of an actress; where the families enter by pass-keys as into their store-rooms, and show it you as they might their dairy and still-room, this cathedral is fitly set down, not in a market-place, but in a private garden, railed and provided with padlocks, where the levitical dogs and bicycles are aired. Nor is this modern. One sees that the fourteenth century arrangements, the stone screens and private cage-chapels, testify to the self-same spirit. The monks of this abbey must have been aristocratic club-men, barely allowing the townsfolk a glimpse of the church; not, as in Italy, hiding their cloistered persons at the extreme end of the building, behind narrow gratings and altar-pieces, but boldly cutting the church in two and appropriating the greater and more important half, the transepts even, and all the chapels.



The Swan Inn. Who shall say the loveliness of this place!—Page 190.

And now for the "Musical Festival" itself. My impressions, rather than musical, are, so to speak, sociological. They are mainly of two things, constantly combined, namely, of a practicality unchecked by æsthetic reverence (exemplified in the "wipe your feet" of Westminster Abbey) and of that extraordinary tendency to appropriate, to make and treat things as private property, whether of individual or group of individuals. These two impressions are brought home by the first revelation of what this Musical Festival is: marquees, built up against the cathedral, and men with rosettes collecting tickets; and the nave, the serious Norman nave with its elephant columns, converted into a hideous concert-room of most banal glaring gas, and closed; the whole transepts and choir blocked by a frightful wooden tribune, crammed with men in cutaway coats and women in every variety of High-Street pink, blue, and white millinery; all for the giving of what is ostensibly a great charity concert by the dean and chapter, who provide lunch and tea in tents on their lawns all round the buildings. The Middle Ages, you will say, had its Feasts of Fools, its miracle plays (Spain still has) at the very altar, and whole towns ate their meals and transacted business, and perhaps slept, in the great cathedrals. Doubtless: but that was because God's house was man's house, open for everything, open always, open for every beggar. Here, on the contrary, it is a small corporation which turns *its* house into a concert-room, closing it except on payment, then closing it altogether at other times;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and, during services, shutting the rites away —in what? in the invisible chancel become a sort of vast family pew, surrounded by places for hanging coats, keeping books, etc., etc. One is relieved to think that such concerts, however fine, cannot be given at Amiens or Notre Dame; that when they were given, with Sixtine choirs or ducal chapels, in St. Peter's or St. Mark's, all the setting aside of purple and gold-latticed places for Pope or Senate could not prevent the most tattered vagabond in Rome, the filthiest boatman in Venice, from entering the body of the church and listening with the rest.

After the first performance, having borrowed a private family key, I went to listen in the triforium, clambering up the narrow tower stairs. Here was what I had wanted: the ineffable charm of music in a church, of a band and choir utterly hidden from sight, so that the music seemed, as it ought, to embody itself, not in human beings (least of all smug laymen and laywomen not disciplined into impersonality), but in the architecture. For music of all things seems remotest from the biped which produces it; and it is only when a singer has grace of gesture, beauty, or fervor of face, that we feel it otherwise than unnatural, desecrating, to associate the two together. Short of one or two exceptional personalities of singers who are also marvellous actors, music should be made to consort only with architecture. A beautiful church will become for our fancy, as easily as a finely shaped fiddle or double bass, the creature, the organism which produces great music. It is an enormous credit to England (so enormous indeed that I cannot but suspect in it much that is purely accidental), not merely that England accepted Handel during his lifetime, as France accepted Lulli, Gluck, and Cherubini, but that it has, in a way quite unparalleled (more so than Germany for Beethoven, Mozart, or Bach), kept his memory alive as a national institution. These great Handel performances are already recorded by Burney and Mount Edgcomb in the 70's and 80's of the eighteenth century; Pacchierotti's and Rubinelli's versions of *I know that my Redeemer* and *He was Despised* being compared already to the versions of singers more nearly Handel's contemporaries. It certainly does that disgusting England of Hogarth great credit; and one imagines it must have been due to its snobbish, obsequious imitation of what I should call the *England of Reynolds*—that privilege-born flower of grace and simplicity of which some trace seems even now to remain. But it is marvellous that the great ghost of Handel should have sat as domestic cat by the hearth of the Great Britain of 1830–1860; of Dickens, Thackeray, and the inconceivable historical painters and genre painters, their contemporaries. One would have imagined that the period which failed to recognize Turner would not have recognized him. Of course I cannot help suspecting some accident in it all, and that Handel, through a series of misinterpretations, got credited with a certain smug quality grateful to the English bourgeois; and this suspicion seems justified by the extraordinary fact of England having found as *pendant*, as fellow-supporter to this lion, the unicorn—half-stag, half-greyhound—Mendelssohn, whose works seem to follow Handel's, at this festival, for instance, like a necessary shadow. I fear this must be partly explained by the fact that, like my friend E. S., dear old little "Missy," the British public attaches some special honor to what she called *oratorical* music.

The three days' "Musical Festival" are over. This little corner—where for six days which have seemed endless, I have been uncomfortable and lonely—takes for me, now I am leaving it, a certain pathetic charm. The house I am in is one of those red brick Georgian ones which, although mere boxes or doll's houses, have yet the shapeliness of proportion; a fine wooden stairs under a wide window inside, an iron arch (with empty lantern ring), and railing enclosing a microscopic garden, and big, handsome stone vases over the lilac bushes. Opposite and alongside, crooked also, an old beam house and an old high-pitched one painted orange yellow. Beyond, the yellowing limes; above, the cathedral tower and Norman pinnacles; a constant sound of rooks, great peacefulness, broken only by occasional pianos.

THE COTSWOLDS

Every country has its *Inland*, its places striking one as hidden in that country's heart; but these Cotswolds have struck

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

my fancy as being the deep-hidden nucleus of England. Perhaps it would be different if I had reached these places by rail, followed the valleys, instead of rushing up and down these long low slopes, associating them with long stretches of empty roads across pale pastures, and with the tempest of the motor's swiftness. The fascination lies in this, that this remote country of crushed down hills and silted shallow valleys, so bleak and empty, holds the traces of our oldest historic England: of our great Middle Ages, as different from those of the Continent as these low hills and wide valleys are different from the hills and valleys of other countries. I mean those villages, Chipping Hampton, Stowe-on-the-Wold, Houghton-on-the-Hill, which, with their one street of lovely stone cottages, of small manor-house, and grammar school, their large and dignified church of the times of the Edwards and Henrys, are really small towns, unwalled, untowered, safe in the remoteness of our Island and of its innermost, oldest hills. Towns which, with their wool-stapling burgesses, represent the life of England in Froissart days, explain the policy and power which went with Burgundy and Flanders against France, and fought Crécy and Agincourt. With their fine gray stone still fresh, they have also a certain knightly air suitable to such memories; they are Gothic, and their houses have the shapes and ornaments of Elizabethan houses and Oxford Colleges.

Keyhaven, looking toward "The Marina."

My earliest impression of the Cotswolds is of the large village or little town of Painswick: high, bleak hill-sides, pasture with stone hedges, and beech-woods visibly yellowing and rustling in the cold wind which sweeps the veil of rain in the wide valleys below. It consists mainly of handsome gabled stone houses, with well-cut lintels and string courses and slate roofs, of sixteenth or seventeenth century. The churchyard, set with rows and rows of rounded yews, is full of tombstones, or, more strictly, monuments, of that same fine gray stone, dating from the end of seventeenth to middle of eighteenth century, so far as inscriptions remain uneffaced to tell: sarcophagi, big voluted boxes, sort of Diogenes lanterns, and classic tripods, ornamented with the most beautiful Louis XIV and Louis XV scroll work —cherub heads and fruit, like the very finest contemporary silver or French carving; curves certain, delicate, distinguished, and carved with infinite skill. The odd part is that these tombs, fit for the greatest personages, are none of them of gentry but of yeomen and cloth weavers who worked in the old water-power mills between this place and Stroud, some of which still remain. These graves give a curious suggestion of an Old-World life, of manual labor united with wealth and refinement, such as we read about in Mary Wilkins. A delightful, bracing neighborhood, and with a suggestion of breathable life.

Soon after that we went by train to Ciren-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cester, and bicycled thence to Gloucester across a high-lying pasture country, somewhere by the place where the Thames rises, down onto the Roman road, returning again by a fine moon. The delight of the dry, bright air up there, the sense, after so much stifling in cold damp, of being high up, in a country of stone, not mere loam; the delicate fresh grass, the tufts of beechwood strained upon rocky quarries here and there of yellowing stone, stone walls alternately among wild hedges, and all the houses and cottages, with string courses and lintels, of fine gray stone, sometimes washed pink. The place where a great river might take its rise, and where one can live in the full sense. For, like water, we, too, require rock, to filter us and make us clean, to give us current and eddy. No clay valleys will do! As the long twilight died into the faint moonlight through a thin veil of cloud, the places—villages, stone hunting inns with great stone stables and far-stretching barns, the hill-sides tufted with trees asleep under the moon—seemed higher up perhaps even than they are. A country where one draws breath.

At Cirencester we saw a really charming church of fifteenth or sixteenth century, absolutely without transept or choir, or, in fact, anything of the church shape; a great dining-hall, you might say, with wide white windows on two levels and on all sides, and carved timber roof carried on slender clustered stone shafts: wonderfully light, bright, and airy. It is in this that English architects triumphed, and to this [which is merely the glorified Tudor manor-house hall, where you sit between walls of mullioned glass on either side, as at Losely, or at Knole] that English architecture constantly tended—the expression of the quite unreligious England of Chaucer, nay of Shakespeare, very bright, free, and not without romance: an outdoor people asking, in a damp climate, to have the illusion of being in the open air, seeing trees wave through the two windows, through the whole thickness of a house or church.

Another time we got among the Cotswolds by motor, and from the Oxford side. You begin to rise soon out of Oxford and between Eynsham and Whitney, after crossing a lovely flush river (the Windrush?) get on to the great wide, high-lying pastures and reaped fields, lying open, scanty hedged and separated by walls of pale, loose stones, to the winds of heaven. Such fresh and solitary places utterly bare of inhabitants and habitations; at most, along the Roman road, where it is fringed while with thin beeches, an old inn; or here and there a flock of sheep, marked blue, with their little house on wheels planted on the stubble or a great machine whirling the sheaves; or a man, solitary under that wide round, windy, cloudy heaven, ploughing.

And once we met a drove of ponies for sale; the men, gypsies perhaps, jokingly offering this motoring party a beautiful little beast and a tiny race-horse colt.

As we rush past in the wind along those high places we barely see, hidden among the willows of the shallow valleys, gray stone roofs and old turreted church towers. To one of these we descend from the long flat hill tops, Colne St. Denis (pronounced Colne Deans). And in a tiny hollow, under immense trees, limes and walnuts, are a few beautiful gray-stone gabled houses, and a little old church, surrounded by green sward; and, oh, such a divine little stream! shallow, rapid, pellucid, with long streaming weeds—the Colne. In this tiny place, hidden between those solitary wide uplands, lived M——'s grandfather for fifty years. We find his and his brother's tombs, and the vicarage where her father was born. What a Wordsworthian life (the diary of D. Wordsworth, which M.'s aunt has been reading us out loud, makes one realize it, or White's "Selborne")! that of the clergyman of such a spot, still miles out of the reach of railways—a clergyman who died in 1826.

We followed the little Colne along its shallow duct between the wolds, over bridges and past gabled cottages and little manor-houses of fine gray stone, to Bibury, where we had tea at a hunting inn, the Swan. Who shall say the loveliness of this place! The sloping wolds enclosing a little world, peaceful and romantic, remote beyond words, a reach of that rapid river with long weeds waving, green like church glass, in its pellucid waters; big limes and walnut trees, a bit of meadow flowery like a swamp, gardens and orchards with great box and yew hedges, gabled stone cottages with roses on them, big stone-roofed steadings and, by the little Gothic church, a Tudor manor-house, tiny, perfect.

The gray stone, the stone tiles, faintly

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

weathered with yellow lichen, give this place, and all the villages and little towers of this wonderful part of Gloucestershire, an air at once of venerable prosperity and

from the wolds, returning. This, for a town is what Bibury and the various Colnes, St. Denis or Roger, are as villages. A wide street of fine stone houses, gabled and tur-

The cliffs of the Isle of Wight, and the dangerous corner by the Needles.—Page 192.

of a certain austerity, of art scorning mere picturesqueness, as in certain stone villages of Touraine.

It rained heavily at Bibury and we had to shelter under a great walnut tree on the triangular village green.

The life of this once prosperous part of the world, of the staplers who produced the wool sold to Flanders, has sheltered and hidden itself along the valleys of the Colne and Windrush, of other tributaries, doubtless, of the upper Thames. It reaches its acme at Burford, on to which we descended

ret-windowed, and with pinnacles, plunging from the ploughed fields and pastures down to the lush, willowy Windrush. And at the town's end, by the river, having pushed open a cranky wooden door in a wall, you find yourself before a wonderful little Elizabethan manor-house, richly and delicately carved; its chapel alongside; all utterly dismantled, ruined, empty upon its lawn and beneath its great trees. I never thought it possible to see a house in such condition out of Italy. The delicate stucco ceilings fallen in, the Queen Anne staircase

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

broken, holes yawning in the fine panelled rooms; the very grates torn out and lying about, among heaps of rubbish and rags and rotting apples. We were shown over by a child, ragged as out of a London slum. The house was built by Sir Laurence Tansfield, Chancellor of the Exchequer of Queen Elizabeth, who lies, cut out of painted alabaster, side by side with his ruffed dame, under a painted Renaissance canopy in Burford church. There is something almost droll in the contrast between the preservation of the tomb and the ruin of that house given over to ghosts and owls.

The other principal house is the "Gun Inn," owned by "Old Smith."—Page 193.

The church is decidedly beautiful, of fourteenth or early fifteenth century work, like all these small Oxfordshire churches and like those between Bedford and Cambridge. What a time of splendid prosperity and sense of beauty, that period, barely interrupted by the Wars of the Roses, going from Chaucer to Shakespeare! And how these little valleys of the Cotswolds make one understand what was meant by Merry England!

PLACES FOR STEVENSON

I felt just a little afraid when I started on this visit to the South-Western Coast. The name of the house I was going to, "The Marina," had conjured up a dreary vision of rows of semi-detached houses facing the sea, and a beach not without asphalt walks and band-stands. I began to be reassured already during the dark drive (reassuringly protracting itself!) from the station, as I noticed the tortuousness of the lanes, the slope of the fields, and the significant fact that the trees were kneaded, so to speak, by the winds into round, shorn clumps, or, in the rough hedges, bent, made to thrust forward across the road, by the wind's violence.

And even in the night I understood my mistake, and was happy when we stopped in no village, but among hedges, a light-house flashing opposite; and got down in an old-fashioned yard, great high-pitched roofs running down to it; while against the starlight there printed itself a little terrace with eighteenth-century rail, the terrace from which the rich smuggler, or even retired Stevensonian buccaneer, could watch the marshes of the Solent, the cliffs of the Isle of Wight, and the dangerous corner by the Needles. . . .

The little house is full of strange cupboards in the thickness of the walls and in the panelling, Farmer Barker's wife, an old lady over eighty, says it is a "smuggler's cabin." It is painted faint rose over the pale brick picked out with black; and the side against the road is weather-tiled; the high-pitched roofs are orange. To the back great ricks; and the first day a threshing machine was making what to me must always be a pleasant noise; the men pitchforking the great bundles up and down. From the windows, behind trees, a glint of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Topsham, . . . where a certain Old-World silence, whence treasure-finders might well start—start even now for a voyage into the adventuresome past.

sea, a corner of marsh, and the coastguards' mast and flag.

The other principal house is the "Gun Inn," owned by "Old Smith," who has the reputation of a "terrible man," and looks any amount a smuggler. Opposite, apparently across the marsh only, the long low buildings of Hurst Castle; and every now and then, masts—white sails passing beyond.

Yesterday after dinner we went out to see the naval (torpedo?) practice. The moon was almost full still, high, surrounded by a cold luminous sky. On the other side the long white beams of the searchlight lay across the water, ruffled and made ragged presently by the smoke of the guns. Every now and then came their great dull thud, through the constant yelping, yapping clatter of some part of the machinery (perhaps electric) from Hurst, like barking of distant dogs; and in between shrieked seagulls and squealed curlews.

Another Stevensonian impression along that coast is that of Topsham, where a great south country estuary narrows to a river, and to which we got by bicycle and ferry-boat. It is a shipping town, important in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, its houses all spread along the water edge of that time; nice red Queen Anne, with delicate pillared porches and iron-wrought gates, gabled earlier ones, all slated and tarred over the slate, and most with some unusual thing in the way of high-perched attic and zazebo of every shape, telling of the well-to-do skippers' wish to see, and habit of living surrounded by glass. Perfectly clean, and, though absolutely quiet, prosperous and spick and span like a ship; in the windows always the cage with the parrot. A little place, with its wooden pier into the river, its street along the water, its nautical variety of building, and a certain Old-World silence, whence treasure-finders might well start—start even now for a voyage into the adventuresome past. We ferried over the estuary there. From the towing-path by the ship canal opposite—such lovely bluish water flush with the green fields—Topsham looks quite imposing, spread out along the water, gables and bow-windows and old cedars; not a fishing village, but a happy resting-place for successful Robinson Crusoes. The reflected light off the water making its white and pink walls, its straight lines and pointed black roofs, brilliant in the calm evening. We recrossed the estuary, now very wide, at a funny place called Star Cross, a sort of minor Topsham I fancy, where in the twilight one could guess at similar skippers' houses, and a long row of yews or cypresses, clipped into toy-box shape, stood along the water. A serene sky, and water strewn with pale blue reflections. Opposite, the light of the river mouth; in front just distinguishable the sea bar, with sailing boats riding behind it.

And to close it, came a charming last impression of this Old-World part of England, which makes one wonder, for a moment,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The dear old currier's shop where we bought such very English hunting-gloves.

whether there exists any modern England at all. The hunting-inn, where we amused ourselves with old, old bound volumes of *Punch* and a collection of old English songs, Dibdin's and Arne's, *Tom Bowling*, and the rest, when the motor had broken down in the middle of the New Forest. Dear little market-town of Romsey also, with Norman abbey surrounded by low red-brick houses and colossal trees; and the dear old currier's shop where we bought such very English hunting-gloves, shaped, you would think, with a hedger's scissors and sewn with a skewer, but aristocratically long in the wrist and tapering in the fingers. The reaping machines with their big horses in the wide fields by the sea; the cottage gardens of phlox and mallows; the jungle-stream mimicking primeval forests with its blackberries and hips and haws; the old-fashioned house among rustling ilexes, with its view of the sea-marsh bounded by the pale cliffs of Yarmouth. Above all, that little church, shapely, pathetic, among its big trees and eighteenth-century graves, with chiming clock. Those chimes, that little tune preceding hours and half hours, whether they sound from a tower or from the bird-cage clock in an anteroom, are for me the voice of this peaceful, prosperous, modestly picturesque and lovely old English country.

"HIMSELF HE CANNOT SAVE"

By M. A. DeWolfe Howe

THE taunt is now the very wreath of praise
For brows most worthy to be garlanded;
Others he saved—and, crowned with deathless bays,
The serving myriads follow where he led.

Renouncing what the heart hath cherished most,
Superbly impotent themselves to save,
Conquered on every hand, a conquering host—
They throng his footsteps, even to the grave.

For others keep your scorn and pitying tears;
Spend them on those who save themselves alone!
All the poor salvage of their troubled years
Stands at the last unenvied—all their own.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE DARK FLOWER

(THE LOVE LIFE OF A MAN)

PART II—SUMMER—(CONTINUED)

BY JOHN GALSWORTHY

XVI

AT her cottage Olive stood often by the river.

What lay beneath all that bright water—what strange, deep, swaying life, so far below the ruffling of wind, and the shadows of the willow-trees? Was love down there too? Love between sentient things, where it was almost dark; or had all passion climbed up to rustle with the reeds, and float with the water flowers in the sunlight? Was there color? Or had color been drowned? No scent and no music; but movement there would be, for all the dim groping things bending one way to the current—movement, no less than in the aspen leaves never quite still, and the winged droves of the clouds. And if it were dark down there, it was dark, too, above the water; and hearts ached, and eyes just as much searched for that which did not come.

To watch it always flowing by to the sea; never looking back, never swaying this way or that; drifting along, quiet as fate—dark, or glamourous with the gold and moonlight of these beautiful days and nights, when every flower in her garden, in the fields, and along the river-banks, seemed full of the sweetest life; when dog-roses starred the lanes, and in the wood the bracken was nearly a foot high.

She was not alone there, though she would much rather have been; two days after she left London, her uncle and aunt had joined her. It was from Cramier they had received their invitation. He himself had not yet been down.

Every night, having parted from Mrs. Ercott and gone up the wide shallow stairs to her room, she would sit down at the window to write to Lennan, one candle beside her—one pale flame for comrade, as it might be his spirit. Every evening she poured out to him her thoughts, and ended always: "Have patience!" She was still waiting for courage to pass that dark hedge of impalpable doubts and fears and scruples, of a dread that she could not make articulate even to herself. Having finished, she would lean out into the night. The colonel, his black figure cloaked against the dew, would be pacing up and down the lawn, with his good-night cigar, whose fiery spark she could just discern; and beyond, her ghostly dove-house; and beyond, the river—flowing. Then she would clasp herself close—afraid to stretch out her arms, lest she should be seen.

Each morning she rose early, dressed, and slipped away to the village to post her letter. From the woods across the river wild pigeons would be calling—as though love itself pleaded with her afresh each day. She was back well before breakfast, to go up to her room and come down again as if for the first time. And the colonel, meeting her on the stairs, or in the hall, would say: "Ah! my dear; just beaten you! Slept well?" While her lips touched his cheek, slanted at the proper angle for uncles, he never dreamed that she had been three miles already through the dew.

Now that she was in the throes of an indecision, whose ending, one way or the other, must be so tremendous—now that she was in the very swirl—she let no sign at all escape her; the colonel and even his wife were deceived into thinking that after all no great harm had been done. It was grateful to them to think so because of that stewardship at Monte Carlo, of which they could not render too good account. The warm, sleepy days, with a little croquet and a little paddling on the river and much sitting out of doors, when the colonel would read aloud from Tennyson, were very pleasant. To him—if not

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to Mrs. Ercott—it was especially jolly to be out of town 'this confounded crowded time of year.' And so the days of early June went by, each finer than the last.

And then Cramier came down, without warning, on a Friday evening. It was hot in London . . . the session dull . . . the Jubilee turning everything upside down. . . . They were lucky to be out of town! A silent dinner—that!

Mrs. Ercott noted that he drank wine like water, and for minutes at a time fixed his eyes, that looked heavy as if he had not been sleeping, not on his wife's face, but on her neck. If Olive really disliked and feared him—as John would have it—she disguised her feelings very well! For so pale a woman she was looking brilliant, that night. The sun had caught her cheeks, perhaps. That black low-cut frock suited her, with the old Milanese-point lace matching her skin so well, and one rose, of a strange purple-red hue, at her breast. Her eyes were really sometimes like black velvet. It suited pale women to have those eyes, that looked so black at night! She was talking too and laughing more than usual. One would have said: A wife, delighted to welcome her husband! And yet there was something—something in the air, in the feel of things—the lowering fixity of that man's eyes, or—thunder coming, after all this heat! Surely the night was unnaturally still and dark, hardly a breath of air, and so many moths out there, passing the beam of light, like little pale spirits crossing a river! Mrs. Ercott smiled, pleased at that image. Moths! Men were like moths; there were women from whom they could not keep away. Yes, there was something about Olive that drew men to her. Not meretricious—to do her justice, not that at all; but something soft, and—fatal; like one of these candle-flames to the poor moths. John's eyes were never quite as she knew them, when he was looking at Olive; and Robert Cramier's—what a queer, drugged look they had! As for that other poor young fellow—she had never forgotten his face when they came on him in the park!

And when after dinner they sat on the veranda, they were all more silent still, just watching, it seemed, the smoke of their cigarettes, rising quite straight, as though wind had been withdrawn from the world. The colonel twice endeavored to speak about the moon: It ought to be up by now! It was going to be full!

And then Cramier said: "Put on that scarf thing, Olive, and come round the garden with me."

Mrs. Ercott admitted now that what the colonel said was true. Just one gleam of eyes, turned quickly this way and that, as a bird looks for escape; and then she had got up and quietly gone with him down the path, till their silent figures were lost to sight.

Disturbed to the heart, Mrs. Ercott rose and went over to her husband's chair. He was frowning, and staring at his evening shoe balanced on a single toe. He looked up at her and put out his hand. Mrs. Ercott gave it a squeeze; she wanted comfort.

The colonel spoke:

"It's heavy to-night, Dolly. I don't like the feel of it."

XVII

THEY had passed without a single word spoken, down through the laurels and guelder-roses to the river-bank; then he had turned to the right, and gone along it, past the dove-house to the yew-trees. There he had stopped, in the pitch darkness of that foliage. It seemed to her dreadfully still; if only there had been the faintest breeze, the faintest lisping of reeds on the water, one bird to make a sound; but nothing, nothing save his breathing, deep, irregular, with a quiver in it. What had he brought her here for? To show her how utterly she was his? Was he never going to speak, never going to say whatever it was he had in mind to say? If only he would not touch her!

Then he moved, and a stone dislodged fell with a splash into the water. She could not help a little gasp. How black the river looked! But slowly, beyond the dim shape of the giant poplar, a shiver of light stole outward across the blackness from the far bank—the moon, whose rim she could now see rising, of a thick gold like a coin, above the woods. Her heart went out to that warm light. At all events, there was one friendly inhabitant of this darkness.

Suddenly she felt his hands on her

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

waist. She did not move, her heart beat too furiously; but a sort of prayer fluttered up from it against her lips. In the grip of those heavy hands was such quivering force!

His voice sounded very husky and strange: "Olive, this can't go on. I suffer. My God! I suffer!"

A pang went through her, a sort of surprise. Suffer! She might wish him dead, but she did not want him to suffer—God knew! And yet, gripped by those hands, she could not say: I am sorry!

He made a sound that was almost a groan, and dropped on his knees. Feeling herself still held fast, she tried to push his forehead back from her waist. It was fiery hot; and she heard him mutter: "Have mercy! Love me a little!" But the clutch of his hands, never still on the thin silk of her dress, turned her faint. She tried to writhe away, but could not; stood still again, and at last found her voice.

"Can I make myself love? No one ever could since the world began. Get up, please. Let me go!"

But he was pulling her down to him so that she was forced onto her knees on the grass with her face close to his. A low moaning was coming from him. It was horrible—so horrible! And he went on pleading, the words all confused; not looking in her face. It seemed to her that it would never end, that she would never get free of that grip, away from that stammering, whispering voice. She stayed by instinct utterly still, closing her eyes. Then she felt his gaze for the first time that evening on her face, and realized that he had not dared to look until her eyes were closed, for fear of reading what was in them. She said very gently:

"Please let me go. I think I'm going to faint."

He relaxed the grip of his arms; she sank down and stayed unmoving on the grass. After such utter stillness that she hardly knew whether he were there or not, she felt his hot hand on her bare shoulder. Was it all to begin again? She shrank down lower still, and a little moan escaped her. He let her go suddenly, and, when she looked up, was gone.

She got to her feet trembling, and moved quickly from under the yew-trees. She tried to think—tried to understand exactly what this portended for her, for him, for her lover. But she could not. There was around her thoughts the same breathless darkness that brooded over this night. Ah! but to the night had been given that pale-gold moon-ray, to herself nothing, no faintest gleam; as well try to pierce below the dark surface of that water!

She passed her hands over her face, and hair, and dress. How long had it lasted? How long had she been out here? And she began slowly moving back toward the house. Thank God! She had not yielded to fear or pity, not uttered falsities, not pretended she could love him and betrayed her heart. That would have been the one unbearable thing to have been left remembering! She stood long looking down, as if trying to see the future in her dim flower-beds; then, bracing herself, hurried to the house. No one was on the veranda, no one in the drawing-room. She looked at the clock. Nearly eleven. Ringing for the servant to shut the windows, she stole up to her room. Had her husband gone away as he had come? Or would she presently again be face to face with that dread, the nerve of which never stopped aching now, dread of the night when he was near. She determined not to go to bed, and, drawing a long chair to the window, wrapped herself in a gown, and lay back.

Strange that in her life, with all the faces seen, and people known, she had not loved one till she met Mark Lennan! She had even been sure that love would never come to her; had not wanted it—very much; had thought to go on well enough, and pass out at the end, never having known, or much cared to know, full summer. Love had taken its revenge on her now for all slighted love offered in the past; for the one hated love that had tonight been on its knees to her. They said it must always come once to every man and woman—this witchery, this dark sweet feeling, springing up, who knew how or why? She had not believed, but now she knew. And whatever might be coming, she would not have it different. Since all things changed, she must change and get old and be no longer pretty for him to look at, but this in her heart could not change. She felt sure of that. It was as if something said: This is forever, be-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

yond life, beyond death, this is forever! He will be dust, and you dust, but your love will live! Somewhere—in the woods, among the flowers, or down in the dark water, it will haunt! For it only you have lived! . . . Then she noticed that a slender silvery-winged thing, unlike any moth she had ever seen, had settled on her gown, close to her neck. It seemed to be sleeping, so delicate and drowsy, having come in from the breathless dark, thinking perhaps that her whiteness was a light. What dim memory did it rouse; something of *him*, something *he* had done—in darkness, on a night like this. Ah! yes; that evening after Gorbio, the little owl-moth on her knee! He had touched her when he took that cosey, wan, velvet-eyed thing off her!

She leaned out for air. What a night!—whose stars were hiding in the sheer heavy warmth; whose small, round, golden moon had no transparency! A night like a black pansy with a little gold heart. And silent! For, of the trees that whispered so much at night, not even the aspens had voice. The unstirring air had a dream-solidity against her cheeks. But in all the stillness, what sentiency, what passion—as in her heart! Could she not draw *him* to her from those woods, from that dark gleaming river, draw him from the flowers and trees and the passion-mood of the sky—draw him up to her waiting here, so that she was no more this craving creature, but one with him and the night! And she let her head droop down on her hands.

All night long she stayed there at the window. Sometimes dozing in the chair; once waking with a start, fancying that her husband was bending over her. Had he been—and stolen away? And the dawn came; dew-gray, filmy, and wistful, woven round each black tree, and round the white dove-cot, and fallen scarf-like along the river. And the chirrupings of birds stirred among leaves as yet invisible.

She slept then.

XVIII

When she awoke once more, in daylight, smiling, Cramier was standing beside her chair. His face, dark and bitter, had the sodden look of a man very tired.

"So!" he said: "Sleeping this way doesn't spoil your dreams. Don't let me disturb them. I am just going back to town."

Like a frightened bird, she stayed, not stirring, gazing at his back as he leaned in the window, till, turning round on her again, he said:

"But remember this: What I can't have no one else shall! Do you understand? No one else!" And he bent down close, repeating: "Do you understand—you bad wife!"

Four years' submission to a touch she shrank from; one long effort not to shrink! Bad wife! Not if he killed her would she answer now!

"Do you hear?" he said once more. "You had better make up your mind to that. For I mean it."

He had gripped the arms of her chair, till she could feel it quiver beneath her. Would he drive his fist into her face that she managed to keep still smiling? But there only passed into his eyes an expression which she could not read.

"Well," he said, "you know!" and walked heavily toward the door.

The moment he had gone she sprang up. Yes, she was a bad wife! A wife who had reached the end of her tether. A wife who hated instead of loving. A wife in prison! A bad wife! Martyrdom, then, for the sake of a faith in her that was lost already, could be but folly. If she seemed bad and false to him, there was no longer reason to pretend to be otherwise. No longer would she, in the words of the old song, 'sit and sigh—pulling bracken, pulling bracken.' No more would she starve for want of love, and watch the nights throb and ache, as last night had throbbed and ached, with the passion that she might not satisfy.

And while she was dressing she wondered why she did not look tired. She hurried. To get out quickly! To send her lover word at once to hasten to her while it was safe—that she might tell him she was coming to him out of prison! She would telegraph for him to come that evening with a boat, opposite the tall poplar. She and her aunt and uncle were to go to dinner at the rectory, but she would plead headache at the last minute. When the Ercotts had gone she would slip out,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and he and she would row over to the wood, and be together for two hours of happiness. And they must make a clear plan, too; for to-morrow they would begin their life together. But it would not be safe to send that message from the village; she must go down and over the bridge to the post-office on the other side, where they did not know her. It was too late now before breakfast. Better after, when she could slip away knowing for certain that her husband had gone. It would still not be too late for her telegram—Lennan never left his rooms till the mid-day post which brought her letters.

She finished dressing, and knowing that she must show no trace of excitement, sat quite still for several minutes, forcing herself into languor. Then she went down. Her husband had breakfasted and gone. At everything she did, and every word she spoke, she was now smiling with a sort of wonder, as if she were watching a self that she had abandoned, like an old garment, perform for her amusement. It even gave her no feeling of remorse to think she was going to do what would be so painful to the good colonel. He was dear to her—but it did not matter. She was past all that. Nothing mattered, nothing in the world! It amused her to believe that her uncle and aunt misread her last night's walk in the dark garden, misread her languor and serenity. And at the first moment possible she flew out, and slipped away under cover of the yew-trees, toward the river. Passing the spot where her husband had dragged her down to him on her knees in the grass, she felt a sort of surprise that she could ever have been so terrified. What was he? The past—nothing! And she flew on. She noted carefully the river-bank opposite the tall poplar. It would be quite easy to get down from there into a boat. But they would not stay in that dark backwater. They would go over to the far side into those woods from which last night the moon had risen, those woods from which the pigeons mocked her every morning, those woods so full of summer. Coming back, no one would see her landing; for it would be pitch-dark in the backwater. And, while she hurried, she looked back across her shoulder, marking where the water entered it, and ceased to be bright. A dragon-fly brushed her cheek; she saw it vanish where the sunlight failed. How suddenly its happy flight was quenched in that dark shade, as a candle-flame blown out. The tree growth there was too thick—the queer stumps and snags had uncanny shapes, as of monstrous creatures, whose eyes seemed to peer out at you. She shivered. She had seen those monsters with their peering eyes somewhere, before! Ah! In her dream at Monte Carlo of that bull-face staring from the banks, while she drifted by, unable to cry out. No! The backwater was not a happy place—they would not stay there a single minute. And more swiftly than ever she flew on along the path. Soon she had crossed the bridge, sent off her message, and returned. But there were ten hours to get through before eight o'clock, and she did not hurry now. She wanted this day of summer to herself alone, a day of dreaming till he came; this day for which all her life till now had been shaping her—the day of love. Fate was very wonderful! If she had ever loved before; if she had known joy in her marriage—she could never have been feeling what she was feeling now, what she well knew she would never feel again. She crossed a new-mown hay-field and, finding a bank, threw herself down on her back among its uncut grasses. Far away at the other end men were scything. It was all very beautiful—the soft clouds floating; the clover stalks pushing themselves against her palms, and stems of the tall couch-grass cool to her cheeks; the little blue butterflies; a lark, invisible; the scent of the ripe hay; and the gold-fairy arrows of the sun on her face and limbs. To grow and reach the hour of summer; all must do that! That was the meaning of life! She had no more doubts and fears. She had no more dread, no bitterness, and no remorse for what she was going to do. She was doing it because she must. . . . As well may the grass stay its ripening because it shall be cut down! . . . She had, instead, a sense of something blessed and uplifting. Whatever Power had made her heart, had placed within it this love. Whatever it was, whoever it was, could not be angry with her!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A wild bee settled on her arm, and she held it up between her and the sun, so that she might enjoy its dusky glamour. It would not sting her—not to-day! The little blue butterflies, too, kept alighting on her, who lay there so still. And the love-songs of the wood pigeons never ceased, nor the faint swish of scything.

At last she rose to make her way home. A telegram had come saying simply: "Yes." She read it with an unmoved face, having resorted again to her mask of languor. Toward tea-time she confessed to headache, and said she would lie down. Up there in her room she spent those three hours writing—writing as best she could all she had passed through in thought and feeling, before making her decision. It seemed to her that she owed it to herself to tell her lover how she had come to what she had never thought to come to. She put what she had written in an envelope, and sealed it. She would give it to him, that he might read and understand, when she had shown him with all of her how she loved him. It would pass the time for him, until to-morrow—until they set out on their new life together. For, to-night they would make their plans, and to-morrow start.

At half-past seven she sent word that her headache was too bad to allow her to go out. This brought a visit from Mrs. Ercott: The colonel and she were so distressed; but perhaps Olive was wise not to exert herself! And presently the colonel himself spoke, lugubriously through the door: Not well enough to come? No fun without her! But she mustn't on any account strain herself! No, no!

Her heart smote her at that. He was always so good to her.

At last, watching from the corridor, she saw them sally forth down the drive—the colonel a little in advance, carrying his wife's evening shoes. How nice he looked—with his brown face, and his gray moustache; so upright, and concerned with what he had in hand!

There was no languor in her now. She had dressed in white, and took a long dark silk cloak with a hood. Then listening carefully to make sure no servant was about, she slipped downstairs and out. It was just eight, and the sun still glistened on the dove-cot. She kept away from that lest the birds should come fluttering about her, and betray her by cooing. Passing her flower-beds she plucked some dark clove pinks—he had once told her they were his favorite flower. When she had nearly reached the tow-path, she stopped affrighted. Surely something had moved, something heavy, with a sound of broken branches. Was it the memory of last night come on her again; or was some one there? She came back a few steps. There, in the meadow beyond, she saw a cow brushing against the hedge. Foolish, her alarm! And, stealing along the grass, out onto the tow-path, she went swiftly toward the poplar. . . .

XIX

A HUNDRED times in these days of her absence Lennan had been on the point of going down, against her orders, just to pass the house, just to feel himself within reach of her, to catch a glimpse of her, perhaps, from afar. If his body haunted London, his spirit had passed down onto that river where he had drifted that once already, reconnoitring. A hundred times—by day in fancy, and by night in dreams—pulling himself along by the boughs, he stole down that dim backwater, till the dark yews and the pale dove-cot came into view.

He had indeed crossed the Rubicon. He thought now only of fulfilment. She was wasting cruelly away! Why should he leave her where she was? Leave her to profane herself and all womanhood in the arms of a man she hated?

And on that day of mid-June, when he received her telegram, it was as if he had been handed the key of Paradise.

Would she—could she mean to come away with him that very night? He would prepare for everything. He had so often in mind faced this crisis in his affairs that, now it had come, it only meant translating into action what had been carefully thought out. He packed, supplied himself liberally with money, and wrote a long letter to his guardian. It would hurt the old man—Gordy was over seventy now—but that could not be helped.

After telling how it had all come about, he went on thus: "I know that to many people, and perhaps to you, Gordy, it will seem very wrong, but it does not to us, and that is the simple truth. Everybody has his own views on such things,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I suppose; and as I would not—on my honor, Gordy—ever have held or wished to hold, or ever will hold in marriage or out of marriage, any woman who does not love me, so I do not think it is acting as I would resent others acting toward me, to take away from such unhappiness this lady for whom I would die at any minute. I do not mean to say that pity has anything to do with it—I thought so at first, but I know now that it is all swallowed up in the most mighty feeling I have ever had or ever shall have. I am not a bit afraid of our consciences. If God is Universal Truth He cannot look hardly upon us for being true to ourselves. And as to people, we shall just hold up our heads; I think that they generally take you at your own valuation. But anyway, society does not much matter to us. We shan't want those who don't want us—you may be sure. I hope he will divorce her quickly—there is nobody much to be hurt by that except you and Cis; but if he doesn't—some men won't—it can't be helped. I don't think she has anything, but with my six hundred, and what I can make, even if we have to live abroad, we shall be all right for money. You have been awfully good to me always, Gordy, and I am very grieved to hurt you, and still more sorry if you think I am being ungrateful; but when one feels as I do—body and soul and spirit—there isn't any question; there wouldn't be if death itself stood in the way. If you receive this, we shall be gone together; I will write to you from wherever we pitch our tent, and of course I shall write to Cicely. But will you please tell Mrs. Doone and Sylvia, and give them my love if they still care to have it. Good-by, dear Gordy. I believe you would have done the same, if you had been I. Always your affectionate Mark."

In all those preparations he forgot nothing, employing every minute of the few hours in a sort of methodic exaltation. Just before setting out he took the damp cloths off his 'bull-man.' Into the face of the monster there had come of late a hungry, yearning look. The artist in him had done his work that unconscious justice; against his will had set down the truth. And, wondering whether he would ever work at it again, he re-damped the cloths and wrapped it carefully.

He did not go to her village but to one five or six miles down the river—it was safer, and the row would steady him. Hiring a skiff, he pulled up stream. He travelled very slowly to kill time, keeping under the far bank. And as he pulled his very heart seemed parched with nervousness. Was it real that he was going to her, or only some fantastic trick of fate, a dream from which he would wake to find himself alone again? He passed the dove-cot at last, and kept on till he could round into the backwater and steal up under cover to the poplar. He arrived a few minutes before eight o'clock, turned the boat, and waited close beneath the bank, holding to a branch, and standing so that he could see the path. If a man could die from longing and anxiety, surely Lennan must have died then!

All wind had failed, and the day was fallen into a wonderful still evening. Gnats were dancing in the sparse strips of sunlight that slanted across the dark water, now that the sun was low. From the fields, bereft of workers, came the scent of hay and the heavy scent of meadow-sweet; the musky odor of the backwater was confused with them into one brooding perfume. No one passed. And sounds were few and far to that wistful listener, for birds did not sing just there. How still and warm was the air, yet seemed to vibrate against his cheeks as though about to break into flame. That fancy came to him vividly while he stood waiting—a vision of heat simmering in little pale red flames. On the thick reeds some large, slow, dusky flies were still feeding, and now and then a moor-hen a few yards away splashed a little, or uttered a sharp, shrill note. When she came—if she did come!—they would not stay here, in this dark earthy backwater; he would take her over to the other side, away to the woods! But as the minutes passed, his heart sank, and sank. Then it leaped up. Some one was coming—in white, with bare head, and something blue or black flung over her arm. It was she! No one else walked like that! She came very quickly. And he noticed that her hair looked like little wings on either side of her brow, as if her face were a white bird with dark wings, flying to Love! She was carrying something in her hand. Now she was close, so close that he could see

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her lips parted, and her eyes, love-lighted —that light like nothing in the world but darkness wild with dew and starlight. She held some flowers down to him, and he buried his face in them. What they were he did not see, but their scent seemed to reach his very heart, and awaken the memory of something past, forgotten. He felt her hands rest on his shoulders, and lifted her down into the boat. Then, seizing the branches, snapping them in his haste, he dragged the skiff along through the sluggish water, the gnats dancing in his face. She seemed to know where he was taking her, and neither he nor she spoke a single word, while he pulled out into the open, and over to the far bank.

There was but one field between them and the wood—a field of young wheat, with a hedge of thorn and alder. And close to that hedge they set out, their hands clasped. They had nothing to say yet—like children saving up. She had put on her cloak to hide her dress, and its silk swished against the blades of the wheat. What had moved her to put on this blue cloak? Blue of the sky, and flowers, of birds' wings, and the black-burning blue of the night! The hue of all holy things! And how still it was in the late gleam of the sun! Not one little sound of beast or bird or tree; not one bee humming! And not much color—only the starry-white hemlocks and globe-campion flowers, and the low-flying glamour of the last warm light on the wheat.

XX

. . . Now over wood and river the evening drew in fast. And first the swallows, that had looked as if they would never stay their hunting, ceased; and the light, that had seemed fastened above the world, slowly, for all its last brightenings, fell wingless and dusky.

The moon would not rise till ten! And all things waited. The creatures of night were slow to come forth after that long bright summer's day, watching for the shades of the trees to sink deeper and deeper into the now chalk-white water; watching for the chalk-white face of the sky to be masked with velvet. The very black-plumed trees themselves seemed to wait in suspense for the grape-bloom of night. All things stared, wan in that hour of passing day—all things had eyes wistful and unblessed. In those moments glamour was so dead that it was as if meaning had abandoned the earth. But not for long. Winged with darkness, it stole back; not the soul of meaning that had gone, but a witch-like, brooding spirit harboring in the black trees, in the high dark spears of the rushes, and on the grim-snouted snags that lurked along the river-bank. Then the owls came out, and night-flying things. And in the wood there began some cruel bird-tragedy—some dark pursuit in the twilight above the bracken; the piercing shrieks of a creature into whom talons have again and again gone home; and mingled with them, hoarse raging cries of triumph. Many minutes they lasted, those noises of the night, sound-emblems of all the cruelty in the heart of Nature; till at last death appeased that savagery. . . . And any soul abroad, that pitied fugitives, might once more listen, and not weep. . . .

Then a nightingale began to give forth its long liquid gurgling; a corn-crake churred in the young wheat. And again the night brooded, in the silent tops of the trees, in the more silent depths of the water. It sent out at long intervals a sigh or murmur, a tiny scuttling splash, an owl's hunting cry. And its breath was still hot and charged with heavy odor, for no dew was falling. . . .

XXI

It was past ten when they came out from the wood. She had wanted to wait for the moon to rise; not a gold coin of a moon as last night, but ivory pale, and with a gleaming radiance level over the fern, and covering the lower boughs, as it were, with a drift of white blossom.

Through the wicket-gate they passed once more beside the moon-colored wheat, which seemed of a different world from that world in which they had walked but an hour and a half ago.

And in Lennan's heart was a feeling such as a man's heart can only know once in all his life—such humble gratitude, and praise, and adoration of her who had given him her all. There should be nothing for her now but joy—like the joy of this last hour. She should never know less

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

happiness! And, kneeling down before her at the water's edge, he kissed her dress, and hands, and feet.

Then they got into the boat.

The smile of the moonlight glided over each ripple, and reed, and closing water-lily; over her face, where the hood had fallen back from her loosened hair; over one hand trailing the water, and the other touching the flowers at her breast.

And to-morrow she would be his—forever!

She said just above her breath:

"Row, my dear love; it's late!" And dipping his sculls he shot the skiff into the darkness of the backwater.

What happened then he never knew, never clearly—in all those after years. A vision of her white form risen to its feet, bending forward like a creature caught that cannot tell which way to spring; a crashing shock, his head striking something hard. And then—nothing! And then—an awful, awful struggle with roots and weeds and slime, a desperate agony of groping in that pitchy blackness, among tree stumps, in dead water that seemed to have no bottom—he and that other, who had leaped at them in the dark with his boat, like a murdering beast; a nightmare search more horrible than words could tell, till in a patch of moonlight on the bank they laid her, who for all their efforts never stirred. . . . All white she lay there, and they two at her head and feet—like some dark creatures of the woods and waters crouching over that which with their hunting they had slain.

How long they stayed there, not once looking at each other, not once speaking, not once ceasing to touch with their hands that dead thing—he never knew. How long in the summer night, with its moonlight and its shadows quivering round them, and the night wind talking in the reeds! And then that most enduring of all sentient things had moved in him again; he once more felt. . . .

Dead? It was not natural! Never again to touch those eyes that had loved him with their light! Never again to kiss her lips! Frozen—like moonlight to the earth, with one dark flower still clinging at her breast. Thrown out on the bank like a plucked water-lily! Dead? . . . Not dead! Alive in the night—alive to him—somewhere! Not on this dim bank, in this hideous backwater, with that poor dark being who had destroyed her! Out there on the river—in that wood of their happiness—somewhere alive! . . . And, staggering up past Cramier, who had never moved, he got into his boat, and like one demented pulled out into the stream.

But once there in the tide, he fell huddled forward, motionless above his oars. . . .

And the moonlight flooded his dark skiff drifting down. And the moonlight effaced the ripples on the water that had stolen away her spirit, mingled it with the white beauty and the shadows, to be forever part of the stillness and the passion of a summer night; to hover and float and listen to the reeds rustling, and the whispering woods; to be one with the endless dream—that spirit passing out, as all might wish to pass, in the hour of happiness.

(To be continued.)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THOMAS'S BAPTISM

By Thomas Nelson Page

ILLUSTRATIONS BY WALTER BIGGS

"WHAT a storm!" exclaimed the captain as he opened the front door to let the rector out, and a blast of wind and snow nearly swept them from their feet. "It's a regular blizzard! You'd better give it up and take my advice and spend the night."

"Oh, no! thank you. I'll make it all right," said the rector resolutely. "The houses will shelter me somewhat, and I must get home. I want to go over my sermon again. You must give me my revenge next time. Good-night."

"Well, if you will go I must shut the door to keep the snow out. Good-night; you are an obstinate man," said the captain, and he pushed the door to and the rector heard him turn the key as he descended the steps and plunged into the storm.

It was a bitter night. Had the rector known how bad it would be, he might not have left his own fireside, even as lonely as it was and as tempting as was a supper at the captain's with the weekly three games of chess afterward. But it had looked earlier in the day as if the snow, which had threatened so long and had been falling fitfully all day, might end. So the rector, yielding to the temptation and following his habit of years, had banked his fire and, turning the key in his front door, had plodded through the snow, and now, having had his supper and his three games of chess, had to pay for his pleasure by facing the storm in his walk home.

It was, indeed, a regular blizzard. The blast appeared to rage from every direction; the snow, already over knee-deep, drove in sheets of fine particles that stung the face like shot; the wind shrieked and howled through the empty streets and piled the snow in banks against the fences. Again and again, as he wheeled about to try to get his breath, the rector repented of his obstinacy, and oftener than once he thought of turning back, but the memory of the captain's parting speech at the one end and of his unfinished sermon at the other made him press on. He was, perhaps, a little over half-way home when he stumbled over something lying in his path, almost covered by the snow. Recovering himself, he stooped and discovered that it was a man. At first he was not sure that he was not dead; but as he felt him to see, the man began to mumble something about the cold, and the rector discovered that he was only drunk and half frozen. A little further tugging at him disclosed the fact that he was an old negro, by name Thomas Jefferson, one of the well-known characters in the village, and as well known for being a drunkard as for his pompous and, indeed, courtly manners. He prided himself on having belonged to a gentleman who had set him free and then had taken him in the army as his body-servant. After the war he had remained with his master till the latter's death, and he was one of the few colored men in that section who during the period of Reconstruction had stood with the whites. This the members of his race declared was due to his "contrariness," but Thomas asserted that it was because he was "a gentleman" and always "associated with gentlemens." By reason of his good manners he was very popular, and he could have had all the work he wanted; but as soon as he got any money he spent it for liquor, so that gradually he found it difficult to get regular employment and was dependent on such odd jobs as he picked up, and for the rest he lived on the charity of those who had known him in his better days.

When he found what he had on his hands the rector was much puzzled what to do. The storm was so terrific and the snow fell so fast that as he let the man go he was almost covered again in an instant.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Every one was abed at that hour—not a light shone on the street—even the bar of the dive-keeper was closed and dark, in the certainty that no custom would come on such a night. If the rector attempted to return to the captain's for help, he knew that before he got back the old man would be past help. His own house was not very far off and there was nothing to do but to try by himself to get the man there. By dint of pulling and tugging he finally got him to sit up, but he was so drunk that he was almost, if not quite, helpless, and as the storm enshrouded them in its icy sheet the thought crossed the rector's mind that possibly, if he tried to carry him, it would be the end of them both. This made no difference in his resolve. It struck him as a quite impersonal reflection. He was beginning to feel strangely numb and drowsy. By an effort he aroused himself and began once more to try to get the man to his feet.

"Get up, Thomas," he called to him in an authoritative tone. "Get up; don't you hear me?"

The tone or something roused the old fellow from his stupor.

"Who's dis pullin' me 'bout dis away?" he muttered.

"It is I; don't you know me? Mr. Shepherd?"

"Is dat you, doctor?" mumbled the old fellow. It was a title he always gave the rector. "I cert'n'y is glad to see you. For Gord's sake doan' lef me—I'se mos' froze to death."

"I won't leave you, but you must get up and come with me instantly or you will freeze to death and I shall too," said the rector. "You must help me."

"Yes, suh, I'll come. I'se a gent'man," muttered the old negro. "Is you got a drink 'bout you? Jus' a mouf-ful to warm me up?"

"No, I haven't, but if you get up and come home with me I'll get you a drink." He recalled a little that he kept for medicine.

"Yes, suh, to be sho. I'll go wid you," said Thomas. "I doan' remember ever seein' you drunk befo'." And he made such an effort to rise that by dint of much lifting the rector finally got him to his feet, and then, throwing his arm about him, partly supporting and partly carrying him bodily, with much stumbling and staggering, the rector started homeward with his burden.

Once, when the old negro showed signs of sinking to the ground, the rector said: "You must help me, Tom." It seemed to arouse him, for he said: "Yes, suh, I'll help you."

It was a terrific struggle and it often appeared to the clergyman as if he must give up—as if every atom of his force was gone, but he knew that if the negro ever went down again he himself was too exhausted to get him again on his feet, and that that would be the end of them both. So, with mingled entreaties and commands to his companion, and with earnest appeals for strength to the Giver of all strength, staggering and stumbling forward, he finally got his burden to his house, and with a last effort forced the door open and, plunging in, sank with him to the floor in almost as complete a stupor as that which the negro was in. It was some time before he was able to rise, but he knew that his task was but half done, and, crawling to his feet, he set to work to get his fire to burning. He spent the rest of the night trying to keep the old man alive; but he succeeded. It was the first time that he had ever given liquor to a drunkard, and he thought with some compunction of himself, the chief apostle of temperance in the village, pouring whiskey down a drunken negro's throat; but he reflected that he was using it as medicine, even though his patient showed a satisfaction at the draughts not wholly compatible with that theory.

Toward morning the old negro, whom he had covered up on a sofa near the fire, was sufficiently recovered for the rector to feel that he was past all danger, and he himself lay down on two chairs and fell asleep. He was aroused some hours later by hearing his servant's voice in an altercation with some one. The woman had a shrewish temper and an accent like a saw, and she took the best care of the rector she was capable of. She was now demanding with vigor what old Tom was doing "on the doctor's sofa"? At the moment that the rector opened his eyes, old Tom—to speak exactly—was not on the sofa. The abigail's attack had brought him to his feet and he was engaged in trying to appease her suspicions. He was replying

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with great dignity: "Don't talk so loud, ooman. Ef you wake him up you'll see what I'se doin'. Ef't hadn' been for me you wouldn' 'a' had no doctor. Ef I hadn' picked him up in de snow las' night and fotched him home he wouldn' be heah now, I can tell you."

"Picked him up? You? Where was he? What was the matter wid him?" demanded the woman.

"I ain' say nuttin' was de matter wid him," said Tom. "I say I pick' him up and brung him home, dat's what I say, and dyah he now." He spoke with an earnestness which carried conviction. The rector remained still, afraid of the twinges which he knew the first movement would bring.

"I declare!" exclaimed the woman in a low voice. "I wonder what was the matter with him?"

"I doan' know what was de matter wid him," said Tom. "I jes' know I had to help him home like he ax me to do. I know what folks would 'a' said was de matter wid me ef I had been dat away." His voice took on a cajoling accent. "You ain' got a little drap you could gi' me, is you? I give him de las' drap I had to git him to come home. Dat wuz de limberes' leg' man I ever see in my life."

The woman was still expressing her astonishment when the rector sat up. His attitude and his first steps as he got to his feet might have appeared to give some color to Tom's explanation of his presence, but in a few minutes he was all right and he soon straightened out the situation. He gave Tom a homily on intemperance, with which that pliant person volubly agreed, after which Tom was sent to the kitchen to get some breakfast.

It was the following summer and a hot sultry afternoon.

The rector stood at his gate looking out over the landscape before him and meditating on the past. To the right rose the little church embowered in maples and elms where he had tried to preach the gospel for so many years; to both right and left ran the rough, cobbled street with its uneven sidewalks rising in undulations where the roots of the trees that shaded them rose in ridges and lifted the old bricks from their places, and on either side ranged the old houses back in their yards, which gave the village its chief distinction.

It was late Sunday evening and everything was quiet; only the locusts in the trees shrilled their insistent, sawing note. The street was quite deserted and only the summer haze hung over the roadway. The clergyman felt a wave of desperate loneliness sweep over him. A doubt cast its shadow over him like a cloud. What had he accomplished? All his life he had given to the service of his Master as he saw it; but how little fruit he had reaped! He had worked faithfully—had ridden and walked in the cold and the heat, sometimes till he had almost dropped. Yet, that Sunday afternoon at his service only a half-dozen people had attended. They had all gone home now and the zeal that had supported him had worn off. One thing came to him at the moment and gave him pleasure. It was curious how it came to him that broiling afternoon. Perhaps it was the contrast. It was the memory of his rescue of old Tom that bitter winter night. From this day the old negro had from time to time called on him, asserting a sort of claim to his aid in virtue of that night's experience; but if he gave him money the old fellow spent it in drink, and so he had had to stop employing him. And now he had not seen him for some weeks, though he had heard that he had lately been taken up on a charge of drunkenness. The rector's conscience reproached him for having thrown him off. Perhaps, had he not done so, he might have saved him from this last ignominy.

At this moment, as he gazed up the street, a figure came in sight, walking toward him, and the clergyman recognized old Thomas himself. He was walking straight and rapidly, and as he drew nearer it was evident that he wanted to speak to him. He took off his hat while at some distance from him. He was a striking-looking figure, even in his rags, with his white beard and shining bald head, as he came up with quite a military stride, his old hat in his hand. His shirt was clean. He bowed with something approaching a flourish.

"Good evenin', doctor."

The old clergyman greeted him cordially.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

By dint of pulling and tugging he finally got him to sit up.—Page 205.

"Doctor, I hope I finds you well, suh?"

"Yes, thank you, and I am glad to see you—well," said the rector pleasantly.

"Yes, suh, toller'ble only—jus' toller-'ble, thankee, suh! Doctor, I want to see you a minute about a little matter."

"Certainly, Thomas," said the clergyman, steeling his heart against the prospective request for a little loan and resolving to substitute for it a little lecture. Thomas studied the seamed palm of his hand as if it were a map, and presently looked up.

"Well, doctor, I'se been thinking lately about a little matter. I wonders if I was to come up heah some evenin' and git you to let me draw a bucket of water from dat well o' yours, if you'd sprinkle a little of it over me and offer one o' them prayers you says—when you—" He slowly made a shadowy sign of the cross.

The old clergyman's face sobered and his eyes opened wide.

"Do you mean—? Have you ever been baptized?" he asked.

"No, suh! Dat's what I'se aimin' at. I wants to git you to baptize me—to gi' me as much of a baptism as you think I'd be wuth. You knows me an' you knows jes' what I is."

"Why, yes, Thomas. I think—I might," said the rector, reflecting. "But you know if I did that I'd have to ask you some questions and you'd have to answer them in the sight of God."

"Yes, suh—dat's so—dat's what I al-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lows to do." He was evidently awaiting further instruction and he was undoubtedly sincere.

"I'd have to ask you, Thomas, if you'd renounce all the pomps and glory of the world. No—no, I would not ask you about the pomps," said the rector as he glanced at the old fellow's rags. "I would not be such a fool as that. But I'd have to ask you if you'd renounce the devil and all his works?"

"Yes, suh," said Thomas. "Dat what I wants to do. I'se pretty ole an' feeble dese days an' I doan' know dat I'se exactly in a condition to meck a enemy of anybody, but I wants to do it ef I jes' ken git a little help, and I'se heard dat Gord will help you ef you ax him enough—ef you wrastles wid him, and dat's what I aims to do."

"He will," said the rector.

"Yes, suh! I b'lieve He will," said the old man with deep sincerity. "I cert'n'y means to wrastle wid Him."

"But there is another thing, Thomas," said the rector slowly. "You know you are given to—to—you know you get drunk very often."

"Yes, suh! yes, suh!" said the old man sadly. "Dat's my failin'—dat's my weakness, and dat's what I'se come to see you 'bout, 'cause ef it hadn' been for you, maybe, I wouldn' be heah at all."

"Possibly," the rector nodded gravely.

"Well, you see, suh! Hit was dis away. I was a gent'man, jes' like you is. You didn' know de cap'n—my cap'n—de one I used to b'longst to and whose body-servant I wuz, but you see he was one o' de young bloods, and de young bloods used to julep it considerable—yes, suh, dee cert'n'y did," he added with a nod as if he were corroborating a statement made by some one else, "and I use' to be wid 'em—and I got into dat way myself—an' presently it got a kind o' undholt on me. And it gits away wid me. Dat's de trufe. But I'se been tryin'—yes, suh—you mayn't b'lieve it, but I has been trying—and I ain' been very successful tryin' it by myself. An' I been thinkin' dat I'd try to git Gord to gi' me a little lif' to'ds it. An' dat's de reason I wants you to gi' me a little sprinklin', so's I kin ax Him right an' sort o' hold out to Him dat I b'longs to Him. You mayn't b'lieve it, but I ain' been drunk in two weeks—well, not adzactly two weeks, but hard on it," he corrected with careful exactitude. "An' I'se had de money too. Look heah." He took a rolled-up rag from his pocket and, unwrapping it with great ceremony, displayed with much pride a crumpled dollar-bill.

The rector smiled.

"Why don't you go and get your colored preacher to baptize you?" he asked.

"No, suh—not me," said Thomas. "I'se a gent'man, raised wid gent'mens, and as I done lived wid 'em, so I wants to die wid 'em. I ain' never had no special use for water—nerr for drinkin', nerr for washin'. I doan' keer 'bout dese colored folks' religion—too much hollerin' and jumpin' an' shoutin'—an' dat sort doan' keep you from drinkin'. I wants de kind to help me wid my weakness." He gave a nod of self-approval and continued: "I always voted wid de gent'mens tell dese new white folks wouldn't let de niggers vote—yes, suh—I'll get you to help me."

"What made you think of this step?"

"Well, suh," said the old fellow, pondering a little, "hit was sort o' like de win'—hit blows whar it listeth, you know, and hit's hard to tell whar hit comes from. Hit was kind o' like dat. De win' dat night in de snow what blowed you to whar I wuz, or blowed us togerr, whichever way 'twuz, done de fust part. I been gittin' drunk so much—an' not as often at dat as I hankers for it—an' de devil wuz too strong fo' me. He beat me cle'r an' I got so low dee even put me in de calaboose—an' I thought if I had got dat away and couldn' do no mo' for myself dan dat, I'd better tu'n to de Lord and ax Him ef He wouldn' he'p me. I knows He's stronger den de devil ef I ain'."

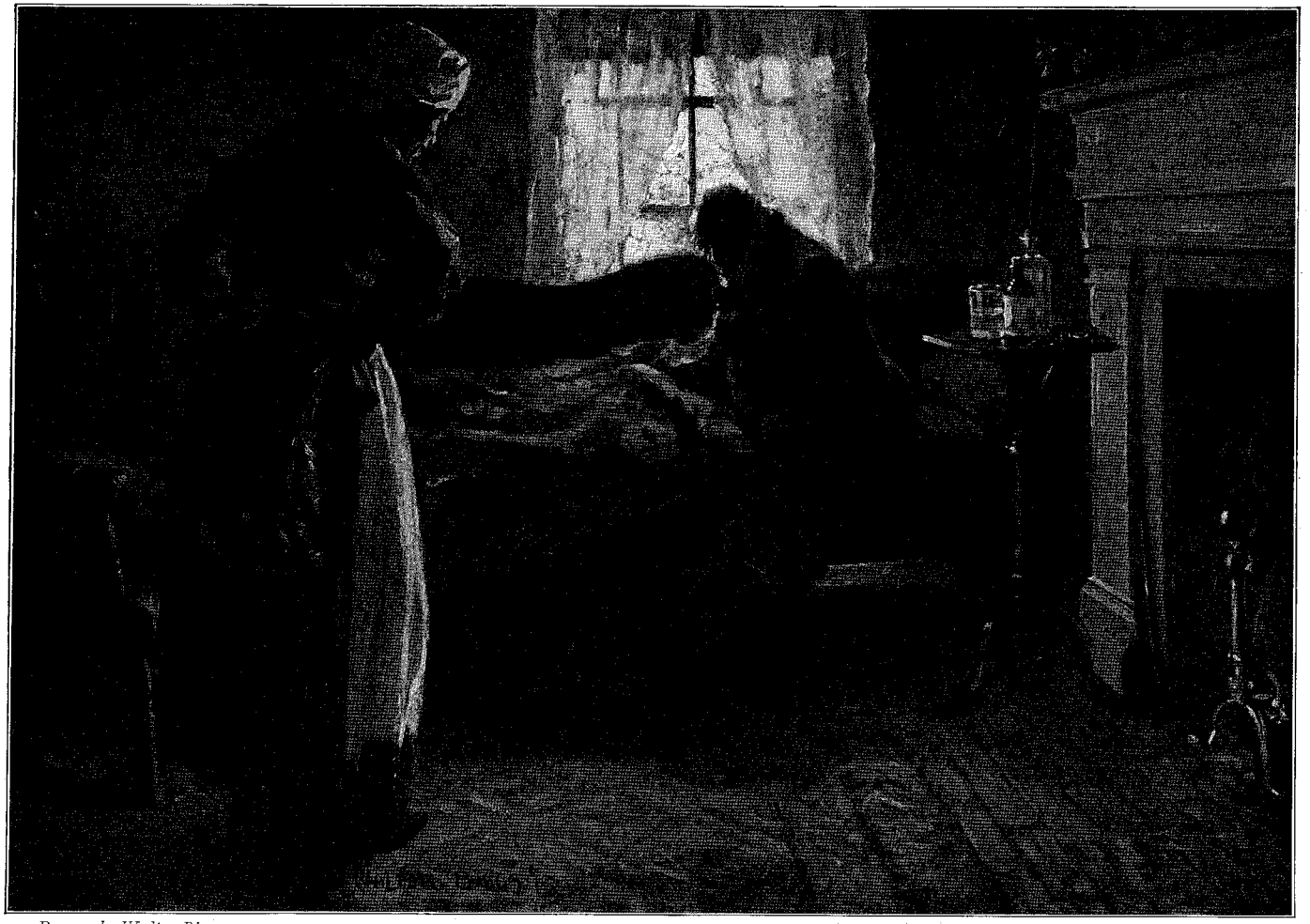
"And you will renounce the devil and all the sinful desires of the flesh and not follow nor be led by them?" said the rector.

"Yes, suh, by Gord's help I will," said the old man solemnly.

"I'll do it," said the rector. "Come back here at this hour next Sunday and I'll baptize you if you have kept sober meantime."

"Yes, suh, I'll be heah by Gord's help," said Thomas. "Thank you, suh." He took the rector's outstretched hand and,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Drawn by Walter Biggs.

She was now demanding with vigor what old Tom was doing "on the doctor's sofa"?—Page 205.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

turning, strode back up the silent street. The rector, leaning on his gate, watched him till he was out of sight and then turned back to his house, his countenance soft with inward happiness.

The rector, leaning on his gate, watched him till he was out of sight.

The following Sunday evening about sunset the little church where the rector preached was open, and standing in the door was the rector and his friend with whom he had played chess that winter night on which he had rescued old Tom in the snow-storm. The captain was a gentleman with a kindly face and, like the rector, was on the shady slope of life. They were looking up the street, the rector somewhat anxiously, the captain somewhat quizzically.

"He won't come," said the captain.

"I think he will," said the rector, though somewhat doubtfully.

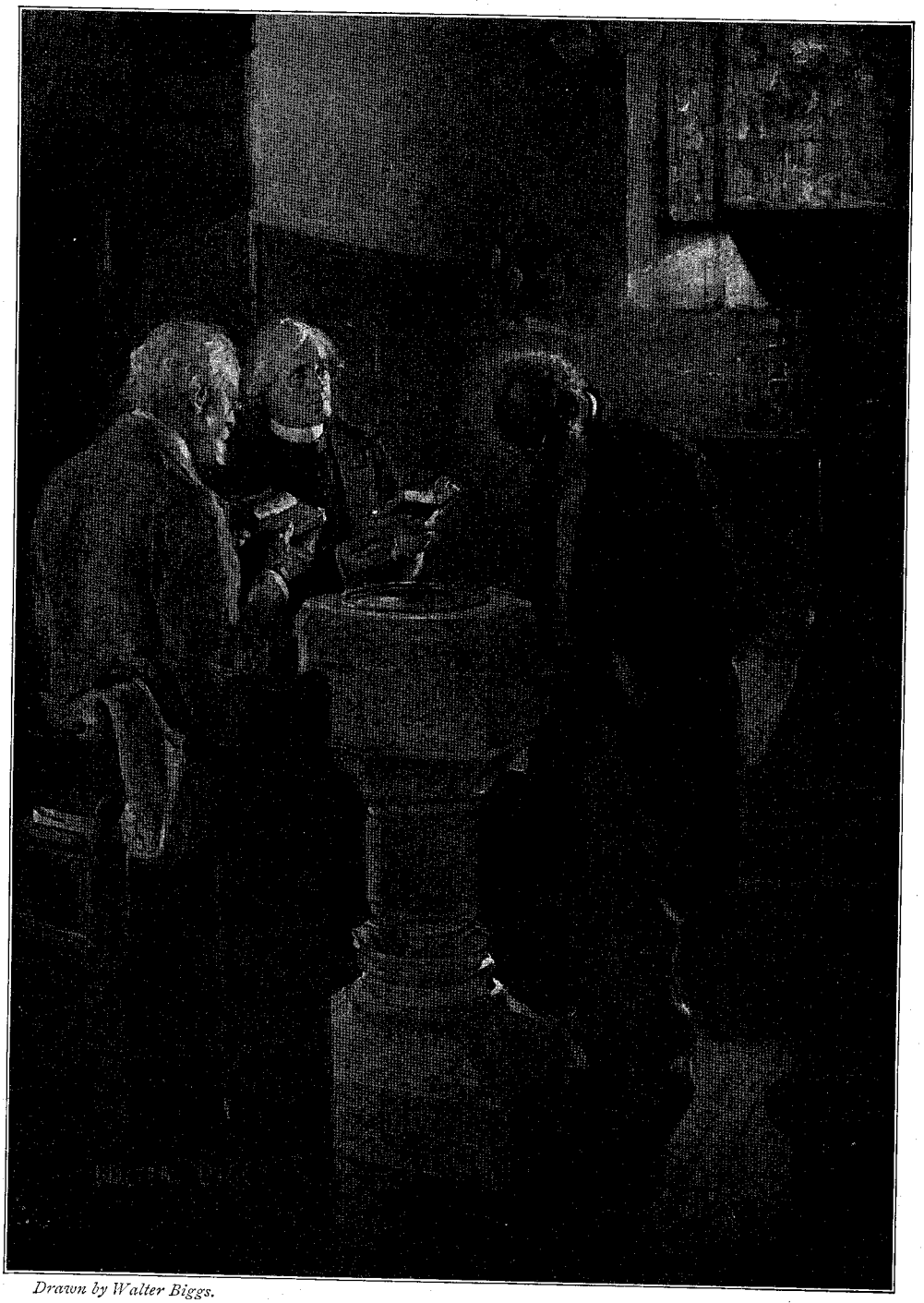
"He is probably in his favorite gutter in the old stable of Jim Bottler's doggery."

"I don't think so," mused the rector, a little more doubtfully than before.

At this moment the subject of their discussion appeared in the distance. He walked perfectly straight. He wore a long black coat of a past generation and a beaver hat much battered and certainly older than the coat. His white shirt was to be remarked as far off as he was visible. His trousers only were not in key, being the old ragged pair he usually wore.

He approached slowly, not hastening in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Drawn by Walter Biggs.

It was a strange-looking group, the two gentlemen with the old negro.—Page 212.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the least, even when he caught sight of the two gentlemen awaiting him. And when he came up to them he wore an expression of deep solemnity. He took off his hat.

"Good evenin', gent'mens—good evenin', doctor—good evenin', cap'n." He bowed to each. Each shook hands with him. "Good evening, Thomas."

"Well, Thomas, we are ready for you," said the rector. "The captain here is going to stand as witness and sponsor for you."

The old man turned and bowed to the captain.

"I thank you, suh," he said simply and turned back to the rector.

"Well, come in; we are ready for you," said the rector.

"Yes, suh, fact is, I wuz afeard I'd be a little late; but I didn' had a weddin' garment, an' I come near axin' you to gi' me a pyah o' yo' ole britches so I could come mo' like a gent'man." He looked down at his ragged trousers ruefully.

"Oh, the clothes make no difference; it is the heart," said the rector.

They went in, the rector first, the captain next, and Thomas following humbly behind.

They walked up straight to the font in which the rector had placed a little silver bowl which had an association for him, going years back to the time when he had christened his own children, all now grown and gone or flown. Now he took three prayer-books and, handing one to the captain, found the place in the other two. One of them he handed to Thomas who instinctively had fallen into his place. His eye rested for a moment on the silver bowl in the font and a gleam of satisfaction flitted over his face.

"Take this," said the rector, "but I will ask you the questions and you will repeat after me the answers."

Thomas bowed. "Yes, suh."

The rector instantly began the service for the baptism of those of riper years.

It was a strange-looking group, the two gentlemen with the old negro—not the least striking-looking of the three—and the ceremony was never more solemnly performed. Nor since the time when Philip baptized the Ambassador of the Ethiopian queen, Candace, was ever a more impressive looking negro brought into the church.

When the rector got to the question about renouncing "all the sinful desires of the flesh and not following nor being led by them," the new convert repeated the answer and added an interpolation: "And my weakness," he said solemnly, "I renounces dat too, an' by Gord's help I'll beat it."

When it was all done, the rector said a few simple words to his convert about following the precepts which he had just heard, and urged him to rely for aid on Him who alone could aid him.

"Yes, suh, dat's what I aims to do," said Thomas, "and I wants to tell you, suh, dat from dis time I means to tetch whiskey very gently." He gazed about him with dignity and then turned to his friends. "We's all three gent'mens and all Democrats, and ef you ken, I'd like you to gi' me a pyah o' yo' ole britches so I ken go to church to hear you preach. I thinks ef I could go and set in de gallery an' heah you preach ev'y Sunday, it would keep me straight all the week."

"You shall have them, Thomas," said the rector, "but you mustn't depend on my preaching to keep you straight."

"No, suh," said Thomas, "I knows dere's a heap o' diff'rence 'twixt preachin' an' practisin'. I ain' never quite got my mind straight 'bout dat night yit."

"Which night?" asked the rector.

"Dat night you axed me to help you home."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On a raised and decked chair, on either side of which stood an armed scout, here, with Quantrel at his feet, sat Garven.—Page 215.

THE MEAN PI-RAYTE

By Hugh Johnson

ILLUSTRATIONS BY WALLACE MORGAN

GARVEN was haled to headquarters from the guerilla warfare in the north to answer court-martial charges for water-curing Filipinos. There was considerable curiosity about him, for he was fresh from West Point and the rumors concerning his atrocities were alarming. He seemed marked for destruction.

He came, a pink-faced Virginia boy, attended by a villainous-enough looking body-servant named Quantrel. It was impossible to look into Garven's round blue eyes and believe the tales of cold cruelty that came so nonchalantly from his pee[illegible]ing-innocent and slightly drooping [illegible]

"Water-cure 'em? 'Course [illegible] of a [illegible] don't believe in this parlor w[illegible], frankly, and proceeded to confide the horrific details of a private inquisition he h[illegible] held that resulted in the summary hangi[illegible] of five priests.

Five Filipino priests! The unctuous little *padres*, unqualified from Rome, were often the chief inciters to rebellion, but to have laid hands on one of them was as much as a man's commission was worth, and to have hanged *five* of them—well, we simply counted Garven lost.

It would no doubt have shocked the irascible author of "First Colonial Families of Virginia" into an early decline to have heard his son tracing an ancestry back to the ill-famed if redoubtable Captain Kidd, but that is what Garven loved to do, and Quantrel strove to bear him out.

"Dat boy's jes' a nach'r'l bohn pi-rayte [illegible]—he's use to practise it when he wahn't so [illegible]igh, en he ain't changed none sense *ettal*."

The court of inquiry arrived from Manila, and it behooved Garven to sing a low song. But he swaggered about headquarters, clanking his sabre, his slouch hat [illegible] defiance to all uniform regulations) [illegible]ned up at the brim and pinned back

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with crossed sabres, his sleeves rolled up, and his sword clanking. He had no mustache, but he had formed a swash-buckling habit of fidgeting with his upper lip. The court was not pleased.

It consisted of a choleric colonel, a dyspeptic major, and an anæmic and myopic captain. Fifty native witnesses were brought down from the north before it. As each took his seat, he bobbed, smirked and smiled at Garven with a sweet deference that was puzzling.

"He's got 'em all intimidated," bawled the colonel.

"Significant bit of corroborative evidence," piped the captain, and the major rubbed his pudgy hands with glee, and scowled at Garven, who sat with inflated chest and frowning visage, in what he afterward termed "sullen and defiant silence."

The court was unable to establish a *corpus delicti* for any one of the five hanged priests. It failed to adduce evidence of

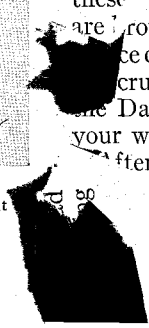
He joyfully learned to lean in approved style against the lamp-post.—Page 216.

He had no mustache, but he had formed a habit of fidgeting with his upper lip.

their names, their habitat, or the fact of their existence. During the attempt the colonel of our regiment, after one agonized glance from Garven's baby face to the inquisitors' fierce ones, emitted a strange sound and hurriedly left the dignity of the court-room. There had not been disclosed direct proof of a single case of "water-cure," and at the close of the fruitless proceedings the choleric colonel addressed Garven.

"Young man—you're clever. You have managed to conceal evidence of your atrocities. But I warn you that I shall make it my business to see that sooner or later these black crimes against the laws of war are brought home to you. Every circumstance characterizes your methods as those of a cruel and remorseless robber-baron of the Dark Ages. I advise you to change your ways."

After that Freddie had his arms tat-



leric colonel went back to Ma-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nila threatening to give Garven "enough rope to hang himself," so we understood the order that came at once sending the boy to an outlandish outpost in Samar, in command of forty fierce little Macabebe scouts. His authority would be almost absolute, and his duty lay in coping with the deviltries of the *pulajane* fanatics in an atrocious station where he would not see a white man for weeks on end. We pitied the boy, but he swaggered out at the head of his very irregular infantry to all appearances as pleased as Punch. Some one asked him his intended course and his answer showed no change of heart.

"Loot," he whispered; "I'll make one end of that island a howling wilderness, and I'll leave it with my pockets filled. You'll see. Those little devils will come to cross themselves when they mention my name."

II

We wondered what his administration would be, and first rumors were far from reassuring. The steamer left him, his Macabebes, and a pile of stores on a slimy sand-spit, between a sluggish estuary and a gloomy sea. In a huddle of stilted grass shacks consisted the seat of his kingdom. A range of forbidding mountains rose abruptly from the tidal plain a mile in-shore, and all between was rank jungle. Some naked natives left their grass nets and eyed proceedings suspiciously from the beach—then scurried into the jungle.

Late in the afternoon a shot sounded from the brush. Garven dashed toward the smoke and emerged dragging behind him a weazened-up old man and a Tower musket of uncertain date, the shock of whose discharge had prevented the firer's escape by knocking him over. That night the natives skulked back to the village and at dawn Garven surrounded it. At ten he held an enforced mass-meeting.

On a raised and decked chair, on either side of which—like halberdiers—stood an armed scout, here, with Quantrel at his feet, sat Garven. He had taken liberties with his uniform. He wore a red silk sash and a crimson head-kerchief. The prisoner was haled before him and interrogated through an interpreter.

Hilario Ignacio San Quentin y Buen Viaje wore no clothing worth mentioning, but as past *presidente* and father of the incumbent he was a citizen of importance. He had fired from the clearest of motives, fear and resentment of an invasion that he did not understand. Garven ordered him to dig his grave and himself told off a firing-squad. This was too much for the onlookers, who stood by with bulging eyes. The son approached on bended knees and the whole populace extended supplicating hands. Garven sat enveloped in silent majesty. All this was entrancing beyond the brightest dreams of his fancy. Wild horses could not have dragged from him the word to fire at this defenceless old man, but he revelled in the imagined ruthless cruelty of doing it. At last he turned to Quantrel and said as slowly as solemnly:

"Remand the prisoner to custody, pending my decision."

The natives were little more than children, if savage children, and the daily levees were no longer enforced; their grotesque formality only awed and pleased the people. Garven dispensed justice and all the intricate features of administration before the eyes of men. He was the state and he was infinitely more, for he was called upon to settle women's disputes and the quarrels of children. It was by no means mummery. These people had been trained to an administration of bribes and graft, and weeks passed before they began to comprehend what Garven's court of clean, human sympathy and justice meant. Power of life and death and more were his.

A woman tried to buy out of limbo her renegade husband—first with the gift of a pony, then with pearls, and finally at the morning levee, she placed on Garven's hand the hand of her own daughter, a comely, slender girl at whom Quantrel leered and the crowd grinned. They did not understand Garven's anger, his swift blow in the face of Quantrel, nor his long harangue to them, but they did know that their young *comandante* exacted no tribute and they said that his justice moved in straight lines.

His task was a man's task, and he brought to it the clean ability of a good man. His life was marked by a savage loneliness that hurt with a slow and dreadful ache, and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

yet he was like a whimsical, humorous boy with a box of lead soldiers.

Among his people there was a squat little man with shoulders of enormous breadth and a bull neck of strength, whose flat nose turned up at the end with a suggestive quirk. In the church had been found an old Dutch helmet and this, minus a visor, looked like a policeman's hat. Quantrel cut a star of heroic size from a kerosene can and Garven whittled a club and embellished it with a cord. A blue soldier's coat completed the outfit. Quantrel called Miguel Calumpit and invested him. He, dumb with fear and wonderment, was caused to kneel. Garven tapped him sharply on the shoulder with the club.

"I dub you Pat Casey. Rise, Pat Casey, copper of Ulut Tubig and protector of the poor."

The copper of Ulut was as Adam from hips to big prehensile toes—above, he was resplendent. He joyfully learned to strut pompously, to twirl his club, and to lean in approved style against the lamp-post that Garven had set up for that purpose.

There was also the skipper and the barge of state. The barge was rendered necessary by the fact that Velasquez, the only other town in Garven's district, was situated three miles up the estuary and accessible only by water. Garven visited it daily and often spent the night. The barge was almost as big as a canal-boat. A canopy of native cloth enclosed a cushioned couch at the stern, and tapestry of the same gaudy material festooned the bulwarks and trailed into the water.

The skipper's equipment was a yachting cap, glassless spectacles—*and not a stitch else*. It was his duty to stand on a raised poop, scan the horizon through two beer-bottles lashed together, and deliver himself of such nautical phrases as Garven could remember and the skipper learn (without the faintest sense of their meaning, but in the gravest conception of their and his importance), such as: "Land ho! on the stabbord bow," and "Port the helm, ye dirty lubbers," and "Thar she blows *and* spumes *and* sputters."

Simeon San Quentin, whose name, through Quantrel's pronunciation, had been shortened to Old Canteen, remained the state prisoner, though he spent the majority of his time squatted some place near Garven's chair, watching the boy in a sort of puzzled, paternal, and admiring silence.

Quantrel, probably for reasons of his own, always affected to believe implicitly in the genuineness of his master's bloodthirstiness, and he used to urge the execution of the suspended sentence.

"Well, Marse Fred," came to be his morning greeting, "gwine shoot Ol' Canteen to-day, suh?"

In this state of affairs it happened, at a particularly Garvenesque moment, that the boy did actually play a game of Double Pedro with his servant for the life of Old Canteen.

III

THE board of inquiry had not lost sight of Garven, and no such sleazy account as this of his government of Ulut Tubig reached Manila. According to their information, the man was a maniac obsessed with the most sinister hallucinations:

He caused the natives to demean themselves before him with genuflections.

He humiliated and outraged them by forcing them to wear outlandish costumes in gratification of his paranoiac fancies.

He sold pardons at the price of the daughters of men whom he had imprisoned without cause.

He had executed numbers of the leading citizens before open graves which he had forced them to dig.

He was aided, abetted, and counselled by a vicious negro with whom he each day played at cards for the life of some victim whom he had marked for destruction.

He had kept the headman of the town, one Simeon San Quentin, in prison for weeks to whet a self-denied appetite for blood that he was soon to gratify.

He revelled in his atrocities and styled himself Ali Baba, and his men the Forty Thieves, and he had looted, burned, and murdered until the region of Ulut Tubig was a fire-blackened and blood-stained wilderness.

This was all told with such circumstance of verity, such corroboration in apparent fact, that Garven's name was bruited about Manila in hush-voiced awe. The court made preparation to visit Ulut Tu-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

big. The choleric colonel roared about the club like a lion, the dyspeptic major preserved a scowling and saturnine silence, and the myopic captain rubbed his thin hands in glee. The three embarked, but they were joined at the last moment by our own colonel, who insisted on being in at what he termed the death. He was non-committal, but not greatly perturbed by what he had heard.

Down in Ulut Tubig the dull routine of daily sameness showed unmistakable signs of breaking. The town itself, ever somnolent on its sand-spit, did not awaken, but the people at Velasquez were beset with fears. Papa Pablo had appeared in the near hills, and the red cross of the Pulajanes had been seen on more than one occasion at dusk on the outskirts of the village. Papa Pablo worked in the dark —very few people had ever seen him, yet his followers took no discount in ferocity from the mad Mahommedans of Moroland. Already two companies of Americans had been massacred in the interior, and Garven's people at Velasquez were afraid to tell him of their fears. Finally Quentin came to him with alarming news. Papa Pablo himself was to be in Velasquez on the second morning following.

A plan evolved in Garven's mind and caused his heart to beat high with hope. He would go to Velasquez on the morrow with his usual patrol, eight Macabebes, Quantrel, and, in addition, Quentin. He would remain overnight as he often did. In the morning he would go for a stroll with Quentin, who would indicate the house. At a signal, that house would be rushed and the island rid at one stroke of its great disturbing element.

The scheme seemed feasible and easy of execution. It worked at the beginning with but one hitch. An hour after the barge of state arrived in Velasquez, a native of Garven's household paddled madly up to the bamboo dock in a sampan.

"Dere hev ar-r-ive," he reported excitedly; "one gr-reat beeg offishee-*al*—with *ee*-gul on da shouldaire—who bellow all same bool carabou—he plainty dam mad, I theenk—one sour fat man—weeth leaf on shouldaire—one capitan wheech wear theeck glass on da nose—one small dar-rk man—also weeth *ee*-gul. *He* say leetul but laff mooch—without noise and mooch shake da stoomach. He say: 'Geev compliment to 'teniente of col-o-*nel!*' He say: 'Send barge of staeet for party!'"

Garven had a very clear idea of what had happened. He had no desire to see his plan frustrated, but second thought told him that the arrival of four unarmed officers would scarcely deter Papa Pablo and might serve to whet his curiosity. The barge of state got under way with the skipper, unusually vociferous and excited by the gravity of the occasion, at her helm. Garven hurried into the village to try to obtain accommodation for so many unexpected guests.

The court had been met not without ceremony, in spite of Garven's absence, for the copper of Ulut and protector of the poor had been on hand, swelling with importance and wreathed in smiles, to greet it. He had been promoted a few days before. Sergeant's chevrons, upsidedown, adorned his sleeves, and sergeant's stripes, generously wide, were permanently painted on his bare legs. He twirled his club in a drum-major's salute. He had acquired no little English of a double-accented variety.

"Da leftenant weel be sorry to mees yez," he said. "He's off to Velasquez on a matther av eemportance."

"Your name?" bawled the colonel of the court.

"Pat Casey, yer Honor," said the copper, like a child answering catechism.

The major made a note. The captain shook his head sadly.

"All true," he squeaked, "every word of it—outrageous—atrocious——"

Our colonel only kept his mouth hidden and his face turned. Then the barge arrived and mouth-hiding and face-turning were of no avail. The skipper, innocent of clothing, save his cap, grave and deliberate as a British justice, and puffed with self-importance, warped his vessel in with a flow of sea-English that would have done credit to a New Bedford whaler, and then *piped the party overside*. Our colonel made the sounds of a frightened guinea-fowl, but the other colonel seemed to take it all as a personal affront. He paced the barge of state like a caged tiger, mumbling, puffing, growling, and champing his jaws. When our colonel had recovered poise, he ventured one timid suggestion:

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"All I ask is, Fenner, don't *mutilate* the boy, and this, in the name of his aged and loving mother."

Fenner only snorted.

Quantrel, not Garven, met them at Velasquez.

"Where's the lieutenant?" bawled the colonel. "Where's Lieutenant Garven?"

Quantrel's eyes bulged from his head. He had never seen such wrath.

"Yassuh—yassuh—he's jes uptown, sah. He didn't hahdly expect so many gemmuns on such shoht notice, sah. Yessuh—yessuh—he's seekin' lodgin' fo' de night. He tol' me to conduc' de gemmuns to deyr quatahs."

Nothing was ever more punctual to schedule than the arrival of Fenner's court of inquiry in the heart of Velasquez, and the well-planned Pulajane attack on the Americans.

Scantly clad brown men, their faces aflame with unearthly passions, seemed to teem by tens and twenties like demons from the earth. In the minds of the little garrison, that first alarmed moment will forever remain as a fragmentary picture of a rabble of onrushing savages, with painted faces and crimson-crossed shirts, brandishing aloft the brightly flashing blades of every wicked form of knife known to armament. Behind them smoke and flame leaped from a dozen flimsy buildings, and the air was instantly filled with the roar of a small lantaka that had been mounted in a blind window.

Garven's men had had about thirty seconds' warning and the rush did not take them with quite that surprise that would have been their doom. They fell slowly back, firing their Krag carbines as rapidly as the nickelled bolts would work, and Garven himself, drawn sabre in one hand, heavy service Colt in the other, rushed forward to their help. The Pulajanes had hardly expected this and for an instant the stinging fire halted them.

But a cadaverous figure in a long white robe was lifted by shoulders clear above their heads. A crimson cross adorned the robe from neck to hem, and in one long and withered arm was held aloft a black crucifix. The figure—it scarcely seemed human—spoke three words in an hysterical scream. The mob for a moment paused to cast awed eyes upward to the sinister labarum above them, and rushed forward again screaming.

The frightened court and our own thoroughly solicitous colonel closed in in a little group behind Garven, who in this frantic crisis showed himself a cool and able soldier.

He knew that in the closed streets of the village, with such a meagre fire as his *some* rush was certain to reach home, and the company was sure of destruction, and he was hastening their backward steps to the open road and the shore. The yapping crowd was ever just before them like a running fire, and, like jets from such a fire, frenzied units rushed out; their bolos clashed on the carbine barrels and their dying hands bore down the guns, making gaps in the brave little line.

At last Garven gained the open, and not a valiant one of his little men but bore the slashed and crimson mark of heroism. They deployed slightly and their concentrated fire stopped the rabble just where the street debouched. Close behind, lay the barge and safety. The Pulajanes, unable to face fire in the open, took to the houses, and aside from some futile arrows falling short, the danger was over.

The blood from a scalp wound squarely down the part of his hair, streaked Garven's face as he stood tallying the number of his little command. He was panting and excited, but suddenly he turned upon Quantrel, who was already almost paralyzed with fright.

"Where's Old Canteen?" Garven asked accusingly. "Didn't I tell you to care for him?"

Quantrel fell to his knees.

"Oh no, Marse Freddie—oh no, Marse Freddie—oh no——"

Garven grasped his shoulder and shook him fiercely.

"Where is he?"

Quantrel could only blubber and plead.

"Stop that damned yammering or I'll blow your head off. Where is he?"

Garven was a sight to inspire fright and he inspired it.

"Oh, Marse Freddie—dem Pollyjannies done clop 'im ober de head wid a cheese-knife, an' I lef him in de cabin."

"Cabin?—what cabin? You're lying."

"Oh no, Marse Freddie, dey didn't clop

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Drawn by Wallace Morgan.

"Da leftenant weel be sorry to mees yez," he said.—Page 217.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

'im ober de head, but he hid an' I run off an' lef' him dere."

"What cabin? I asked what cabin?"

"De fuhstest one, Marse Freddie, wha' you eat."

Garven did not hesitate. He spoke a word to his sergeant and the patrol started unhesitatingly forward. Colonel Fenner interfered.

"Young man, you're not going back into that hole—you can't."

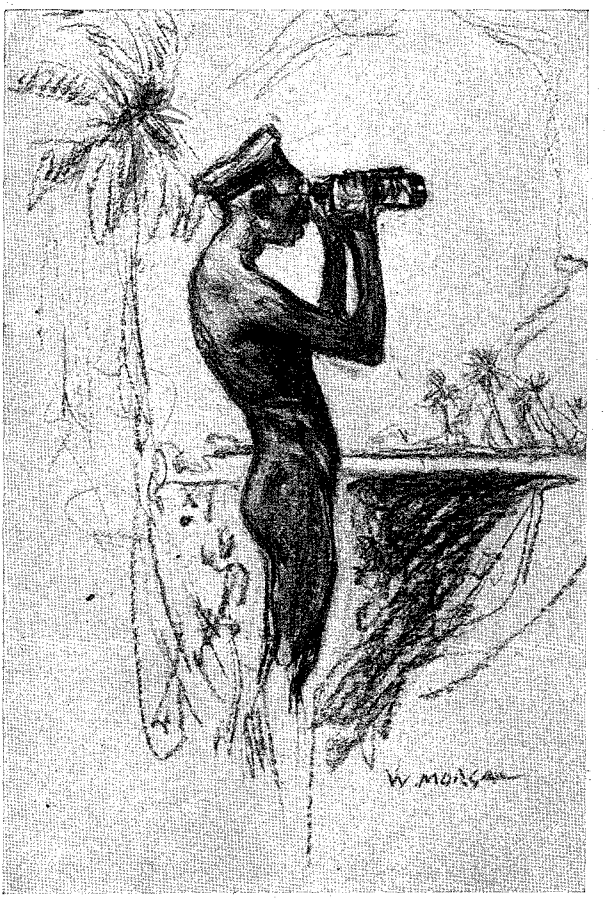
"I brought a prisoner here, sir," said Garven shortly, "a helpless old man that these people have reason to hate. I have no intention of leaving him."

"But you propose leaving *us* here—unprotected?"

The colonel's voice showed a frightened astonishment that his words could not express.

"You're at perfect liberty to accompany us, sir—or you may remain here, as you choose."

"You will do nothing of the kind," exploded the colonel, with a little of his re-

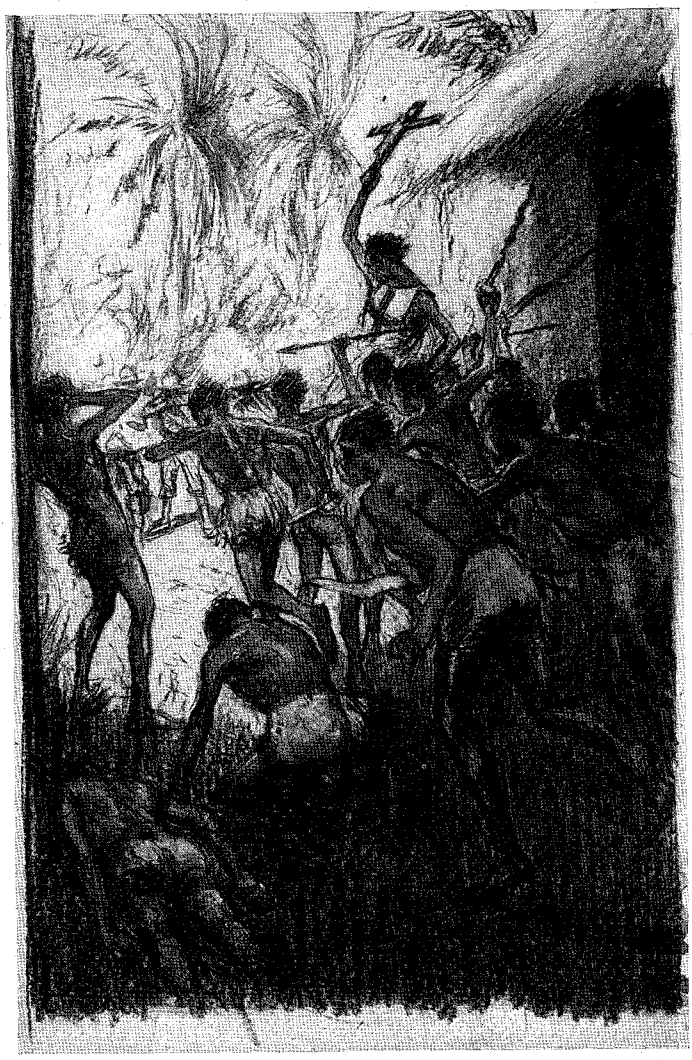


It was his duty to scan the horizon through two beer-bottles lashed together.—Page 216.

turning bluster. "The idea is preposterous—abandoning three field-officers of the American army to go to the rescue of a common tao. I order you to embark."

"I must refuse to recognize your authority, sir, until you produce it. This is my station and I command it. Quentin is one of my people and I am going—unless"—he turned to our colonel with deference—"my colonel wishes otherwise. There's very little danger to you, Colonel Fenner."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



A cadaverous figure was lifted clear above their heads. In one long and withered arm was held aloft a black crucifix.—Page 218.

Fenner stormed at our colonel.

"What have you to say to this insubordinate young man, Fredericks?"

"Well," said our colonel evenly, "he's right—it's *his* discretion."

Without waiting for more, Garven, at the head of his small patrol, plunged back into what was now the crackling flames of all that was left of the barrio of Velasquez.

It was a move totally unexpected by the Pulajanes. He entered by a street parallel to that by which he had emerged, and the fire had driven them toward another flank and scattered them.

He did not meet resistance until he had found the half-conscious Quentin and begun a retreat, and then he encountered a naked-chested little fanatic who rushed upon him with a four-foot kampilan. Garven had only his sabre then, and after six deadly parries and cuts, one of which resulted in a wound in his own shoulder, Garven stretched the man upon the ground. He would not have sold the experience of that breast-to-breast sword-play for all the gems of Ophir.

But there is no discounting Garven's act in going back into burning Velasquez

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the rescue of Simeon San Quentin. Unnecessary from any but the most altruistic conception of duty, made in the face of what was in fact the most deadly danger, and against the advice and even unauthorized command of his superiors, it was a medal-of-honor act, pure, unquestioned, and simple, and that is the way it is gazetted at this hour in every copy of the *Army Register*. But there was still more unlooked-for evidence to appear before Colonel Fenner's court.

The rumor fled ahead to Ulut that Garven had been killed. It flashed to every stilted hut in a space of minutes, and it dropped on the excited little community like a pall. The entire population filtered through the streets to the water-front, and there, from a pile-head, the son of Quentin detailed to the crowd the doleful news in a tearful little speech. In the outskirts a Malay woman raised her voice in the weird native death-wail, and at once other women joined it. It was this sound that was the first to reach the barge of state as it rounded the elbow of Ulut Tubig, and it was this assemblage that crowded close to the rail as the skipper warped in the gaudy craft.

The officers came from the shelter of the canopy and disembarked, seniors first, which brought the choleric colonel into sight—then Garven's colonel, the major, and the captain.

The people waited with bated breath. Then there arose and stood on the rail a sight that they thought belied their eyes.

Garven's forehead was bound by a rakish bandage, bloody enough for even him. The left shoulder of his loose white shirt was seamed with an ensanguined slash. His face was powder-marked and streaked with red.

The hush still lasted for a breathless second, and then all Ulut Tubig rent the air with one ripping, howling pæan of rejoicing, which no doubt sickened Garven to the heart.

It is given to few officers to realize so quickly upon the reason for their straps, to fewer still to gain the coveted bit of bronze that adorns the breasts of only the bravest. But neither of these thoughts gave place in Garven's mind to the tingling delight of his colonel's words and his colonel's twinkling eyes as he pressed the boy's hands with fervor:

"By Gad, Garven, do you know what you look like? Well, you look just like a damned pirate."

And at last he did.

THE RIVER

By Sara Teasdale

I CAME from the sunny valleys
And sought for the open sea,
For I thought in its gray expanses
My peace would come to me.

I came at last to the ocean
And found it wild and black,
And I cried to the windless valleys,
"Be kind and take me back!"

But the thirsty tide ran inland,
And the salt waves drank of me,
And I who was fresh as the rainfall
Am bitter as the sea.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WOOD-LADIES

By Perceval Gibbon

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FLORENCE E. STORER

THE pine-trees of the wood joined their branches into a dome of intricate groinings over the floor of ferns where the children sat, sunk to the neck in a foam of tender green. The sunbeams that slanted in made shivering patches of gold about them. Joyce, the elder of the pair, was trying to explain why she had wished to come here from the glooms of the lesser wood beyond.

"I wasn't 'zactly frightened," she said. "I knew there wasn't any lions or robbers, or anything like that. But——"

"Tramps?" suggested Joan.

"No! You know I don't mind tramps, Joan. But as we was going along under all those dark bushes where it was so quiet, I kept feeling as if there was—something—behind me. I looked round and there wasn't anything, but—well, it felt as if there was."

Joyce's small face was knit and intent with the effort to convey her meaning. She was a slim erect child, as near seven years of age as makes no matter, with eyes that were going to be gray, but had not yet ceased to be blue. Joan, who was a bare five, a mere huge baby, was trying to root up a fern that grew between her feet.

"I know," she said, tugging mightily. The fern gave suddenly, and Joan fell over on her back, with her stout legs sticking up stiffly. In this posture she continued the conversation undisturbed. "I know, Joy. It was wood-ladies!"

"Wood-ladies!" Joyce frowned in faint perplexity as Joan rolled right side up again. Wood-ladies were dim inhabitants of the woods, beings of the order of fairies and angels and even vaguer, for there was nothing about them in the story-books. Joyce, who felt that she was getting on in years, was willing to be sceptical about them, but could not always manage it. In the nursery, with the hard clean linoleum underfoot and the barred window looking out on the lawn and the road, it was easy; she occasionally shocked Joan, and sometimes herself, by the license of her speech on such matters; but it was a different affair when one came to the gate at the end of the garden, and passed as through a dream portal from

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the sunshine and frank sky to the cathedral shadows and great whispering aisles of the wood. There the dimness was like the shadow of a presence; as babies they had been aware of it, and answered their own questions by inventing wood-ladies to float among the trunks and people the still green chambers. Now, neither of them could remember how they had first learned of wood-ladies.

"Wood-ladies," repeated Joyce, and turned with a little shiver to look across the ferns to where the pines ended and the lesser wood, dense with undergrowth, broke at their edge like a wave on a steep beach. It was there, in a tunnel of a path that writhed beneath overarching bushes, that she had been troubled with the sense of unseen companions. Joan, her fat hands struggling with another fern, followed her glance.

"That's where they are," she said casually. "They like being in the dark."

"Joan!" Joyce spoke earnestly. "Say truly—truly, mind!—do you think there *is* wood-ladies at all?"

"'Course there is," replied Joan cheerfully. "Fairies in fields and angels in heaven and dragons in caves and wood-ladies in woods."

"But," objected Joyce, "nobody ever sees them."

Joan lifted her round baby face, plump, serene, bright with innocence, and gazed across at the tangled trees beyond the ferns. She wore the countenance with which she was wont to win games, and Joyce thrilled nervously at her certainty. Her eyes, which were brown, seemed to seek expertly; then she nodded.

"There's one now," she said, and fell to work with her fern again.

Joyce, crouching among the broad green leaves, looked tensely, dread and curiosity—the child's avid curiosity for the supernatural—alight in her face. In the wood a breath of wind stirred the leaves; the shadows and the fretted lights shifted and swung; all was vague movement and change. Was it a bough that bent and sprang back or a flicker of draperies, dim and green, shrouding a tenuous form that passed like a smoke-wreath? She stared with wide eyes, and it seemed to her that for an instant she saw the figure turn and the pallor of a face, with a mist of hair about it, sway toward her. There was an impression of eyes, large and tender, of an infinite grace and fragility, of a coloring that merged into the greens and browns of the wood; and as she drew her breath it was all no more. The trees, the lights and shades, the stir of branches were as before, but something was gone from them.

"Joan," she cried, hesitating.

"Yes," said Joan, without looking up. "What?"

The sound of words had broken a spell. Joyce was no longer sure that she had seen anything.

"I thought, just now, I could see something," she said. "But I s'pose I didn't."

"I did," remarked Joan.

Joyce crawled through the crisp ferns till she was close to Joan, sitting solid and untroubled and busy upon the ground, with broken stems and leaves all round her.

"Joan," she begged. "Be nice. You're trying to frighten me, aren't you?"

"I'm not," protested Joan. "I did see a wood-lady. Wood-ladies doesn't hurt you; wood-ladies are *nice*. You're a coward, Joyce."

"I can't help it," said Joyce, sighing. "But I won't go into the dark parts of the wood any more."

"Coward," repeated Joan absently, but with a certain relish.

"You wouldn't like to go there by yourself," cried Joyce. "If I wasn't with you, you'd be a coward too. You know you would."

She stopped, for Joan had swept her lap free of débris and was rising to her feet. Joan, for all her plumpness and infantile softness, had a certain deliberate dignity when she was put upon her mettle. She eyed her sister with a calm and very galling superiority.

"I'm going there now," she answered; "all by mineself."

"Go, then," retorted Joyce angrily.

Without a further word, Joan turned her back and began to plough her way across the ferns toward the dark wood. Joyce, watching her, saw her go, at first with wrath, for she had been stung, and then with compunction. The plump baby was so small in the brooding solemnity of the pines, thrusting indefatigably along, buried to the waist in ferns. Her sleek brown

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

head had a devoted look; the whole of her seemed to go with so sturdy an innocence toward those peopled and uncanny glooms. Joyce rose to her knees to call her back.

"Joan!" she cried. The baby turned. "Joan! Come back; come back an' be friends!"

Joan, maintaining her offing, replied only with a gesture. It was a gesture they had learned from the boot-and-knife boy, and they had once been spanked for practising it on the piano-tuner. The boot-and-knife boy called it "cocking a snook," and it consisted in raising a thumb to one's nose and spreading the fingers out. It was defiance and insult in tabloid form. Then she turned and plodded on. The opaque wall of the wood was before her and over her, but she knew its breach. She ducked her head under a droop of branches, squirmed through, was visible still for some seconds as a gleam of blue frock, and then the ghostly shadows received her and she was gone. The wood closed behind her like a lid.

Joyce, squatting in her place, blinked a little breathlessly to shift from her senses an oppression of alarm, and settled down to wait for her. At least it was true that nothing ever happened to Joan; even when she fell into a water-butt she suffered no damage; and the wood was a place to which they came every day.

"Besides," she considered, enumerating

It seemed to her that she saw the figure turn and the pallor of a face, with a mist of hair about it, sway toward her.—Page 224.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her resources of comfort; "besides, there can't be such things as wood-ladies *really*."

But Joan was a long time gone. The dome of pines took on an uncanny stillness; the moving patches of sun seemed furtive and unnatural; the ferns swayed without noise. In the midst of it, patient and nervous, sat Joyce, watching always that spot in the bushes where a blue overall and a brown head had disappeared. The undernote of alarm which stirred her senses died down; a child finds it hard to spin out a mood; she simply sat, half-dreaming in the peace of the morning, half-watching the wood. Time slipped by her and presently there came mother, smiling and seeking through the trees for her babies.

"Isn't there a clock inside you that tells you when it's lunch-time?" asked mother. "You're ever so late. Where's Joan?"

It was defiance and insult in tabloid form. —Page 225.

Joyce rose among the ferns, delicate and elfin, with a shy perplexity on her face. It was difficult to speak even to mother about wood-ladies without a pretence of scepticism.

"I forgot about lunch," she said, taking the slim cool hand which mother held out to her. "Joan's in there." She nodded at the bushes.

"Is she?" said mother, and called aloud in her singing-voice, that was so clear to hear in the spaces of the wood. "Joan! Joan!"

A cheeky bird answered with a whistle and mother called again.

"She *said*," explained Joyce—"she *said* she saw a wood-lady and then she went in there to show me she wasn't afraid."

"What's a wood-lady, chick?" asked mother. "The rascal!" she said, smiling, when Joyce had explained as best she could. "We'll have to go and look for her."

They went hand in hand, and mother showed herself clever in parting a path among the bushes. She managed so that no bough sprang back to strike Joyce and without tearing or soiling her own soft white dress; one could guess that when she had been a little girl she, too, had had a wood to play in. They cut down by the Secret Pond, where the old rhododendrons were, and out to the edge of the fields; and when they paused mother would lift her head and call again, and her voice rang in the wood like a bell. By the pond, which was a black water with steep banks, she paused and showed a serious face; but there were no marks of shoes on its clay slopes, and she shook her head and went on. But to all the calling there was no answer, no distant cheery bellow to guide them to Joan.

"I wish she wouldn't play these tricks," said mother. "I don't like them a bit."

"I expect she's hiding," said Joyce. "There aren't wood-ladies really, are there, mother?"

"There's nothing worse in these woods than a rather naughty baby," mother replied. "We'll go back by the path and call her again."

Joyce knew that the hand which held hers tightened as they went and there was still no answer to mother's calling. She could not have told what it was that made her suddenly breathless; the wood about her turned desolate; an oppression of distress and bewilderment burdened them both. "Joan, Joan!" called mother in her strong beautiful contralto, swelling

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the word forth in powerful music, and when she ceased the silence was like a taunt. It was not as if Joan were there and failed to answer; it was as if there were no longer any Joan anywhere. They came at last to the space of sparse trees which bordered their garden.

"We mustn't be silly about this," said mother, speaking as much to herself as to Joyce. "Nothing can have happened to her. And you must have lunch, chick."

"Without waiting for Joan?" asked Joyce.

"Yes. The gardener and the boot-boy must look for Joan," said mother, opening the gate.

The dining-room looked very secure and home-like, with its big window and its cheerful table spread for lunch. Joyce's place faced the window, so that she could see the lawn and the hedge bounding the kitchen garden; and when mother had served her with food, she was left alone to eat it. Presently the gardener and the boot-boy passed the window, each carrying a hedge-stake and looking warlike. There reached her a murmur of voices; the gardener was mumbling something about tramps.

"Oh, I don't think so," replied mother's voice.

Mother came in presently and sat down, but did not eat anything. Joyce asked her why.

"Oh, I shall have some lunch when Joan comes," answered mother. "I sha'n't be hungry till then. Will you have some more, my pet?"

When Joyce had finished, they went out again to the wood to meet Joan when she was brought back in custody. Mother walked quite slowly, looking all the time as if she would like to run. Joyce held her hand and sometimes glanced up at her face, so full of wonder and a sort of resentful doubt, as though circumstances were playing an unmannerly trick on her. At the gate they came across the boot-boy.

"I bin all acrost that way," said the boot-boy, pointing with his stumpy black forefinger, "and then acrost *that* way, an' Mister Jenks"—Jenks was the gardener—"'e've gone about in rings, 'e 'ave. And there ain't sign nor token, mum—not a sign there ain't."

From beyond him sounded the voice of the gardener, thrashing among the trees. "Miss Joan!" he roared. "Hi! Miss Jo-an! You're a-frightin' your ma proper. Where are ye, then?"

"She must be hiding," said mother. "You must go on looking, Walter. You must go on looking till you find her."

"Yes, 'm," said Walter. "If she's in there, us'll find her, soon or late."

He ran off, and presently his voice was joined to Jenks's, calling Joan—calling, calling, and getting no answer.

Mother took Joyce's hand again.

"Come," she said. "We'll walk round by the path, and you must tell me again how it all happened. Did you really see something when Joan told you to look?"

"I expect I didn't," replied Joyce dolefully. "But Joan's always saying there's a fairy or something in the shadows and I always think I see them for a moment."

"It couldn't have been a live woman—or a man—that you saw?"

"Oh, no!" Joyce was positive of that. Mother's hand tightened on hers understandingly and they went on in silence till they met Jenks.

Jenks was an oldish man with bushy gray whiskers who never wore a coat, and now he was wet to the loins with mud and water.

"That there ol' pond," he explained. "I've been an' took a look at her. Tromped through her proper, I did, an' I'll go bail there ain't so much as a dead cat in all the mud of her. Thish yer's a mistry, mum, an' no mistake."

Mother stared at him. "I can't bear this," she said suddenly. "You must go on searching, Jenks, and Walter must go on his bicycle to the police-station at once. Call him, please!"

"Walter!" roared Jenks obediently.

"Coming!" answered the boot-boy and burst forth from the bushes. In swift, clear words, which no stupidity could mistake or forget, mother gave him his orders, spoken in a tone that meant urgency. Walter went flying to execute them.

"Oh, mother, where do you think Joan can be?" begged Joyce when Jenks had gone off to resume his search.

"I don't know," said mother. "It's all so absurd."

"If there *was* wood-ladies, they wouldn't hurt a baby like Joan," suggested Joyce.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Oh, who could hurt her!" cried mother, and fell to calling again. Her voice, of which each accent was music, alternated with the harsh roars of Jenks.

Walter on his bicycle must have hurried, in spite of his permanently punctured front tire, for it was a very short time before bells rang in the steep lane from the road and Superintendent Farrow himself wheeled his machine in at the gate, massive and self-possessed, a blue-clad minister of comfort. He heard mother's tale, which embodied that of Joyce, with a half-smile lurking in his mustache and his big chin creased back against his collar. Then he nodded, exactly as if he saw through the whole business and could find Joan in a minute or two, and propped his bicycle against the fence.

"I understand, then," he said, "that the little girl's been missing for rather more than an hour. In that case, she can't have got far. I sent a couple o' constables round the roads be'ind the wood before I started, an' now I'll just 'ave a look through the wood myself."

Jenks was an oldish man with bushy gray whiskers who never wore a coat. —Page 227.

"Thank you," said mother. "I don't know why I'm so nervous, but——"

"Very natural, ma'am," said the big superintendent comfortingly, and went with them to the wood.

It was rather thrilling to go with him and watch him. Joyce and mother had to show him the place from which Joan had started and the spot at which she had disappeared. He looked at them hard, frowning a little and nodding to himself, and went stalking mightily among the ferns. "It was *'ere* she went?" he inquired, as he reached the dark path, and being assured that it was, he thrust in and commenced his search. The pond seemed to give him ideas, which old Jenks disposed of, and he marched on till he came out to the edge of the fields, where the hay was yet uncut. Joan could not have crossed them without leaving a track in the tall grass as clear as a cart-rut.

"We 'ave to consider the possibilities of the matter," said the superintendent. "Assumin' that the wood 'as been thoroughly searched, where did she get out of it?"

"Searched!" growled old Jenks. "There ain't a inch as I 'aven't searched an' seen—not a inch."

"The kidnappin' the'ry," went on the superintendent, ignoring him and turning to mother, "I don't incline to. 'Owever, we must go to work in order, an' I'll 'ave my men up 'ere and make sure of the wood. All gypsies an' tramps will be stopped and interrogated. I don't think there's no cause for you to feel anxious, ma'am. I 'ope to 'ave some news for you in the course of the afternoon."

They watched him free-wheel down the lane and shoot round the corner.

"Oh, dear," said mother then; "why doesn't the baby come? I wish daddy weren't away."

Now that the police had entered the affair, Joyce felt that there remained nothing to be done. Uniformed authority was in charge of events; it could not fail to find Joan. She had a vision of the police at work, stopping straggling families of tramps on distant by-roads, looking into the contents of their dreadful bundles, flashing the official bull's-eye lantern into the mysterious interior of gypsy caravans, and making ragged men and slatternly women give an account of their wanderings. No limits to which they would not

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

go; how could they fail? She wished their success seemed as inevitable to her mother as it did to her.

"They're sure to bring her back, mother," she repeated.

"Oh, chick," said mother, "I keep telling myself so. But I wish—I wish——"

"What, mother?"

"I wish," said mother, in a sudden burst of speech, as if she were confessing something that troubled her—"I wish you hadn't seen that wood-lady."

The tall young constables and the plump fatherly sergeant annoyed old Jenks by searching the wood as though he had done nothing. It was a real search this time. Each of them took a part of the ground and went over it as though he were looking for a needle which had been lost, and no less than three of them trod every inch of the bottom of the Secret Pond. They took shovels and opened up an old fox's earth; and a sad-looking man in shabby plain clothes arrived and walked about smoking a pipe—a detective! Up from the village, too, came the big young curate and the squire's two sons, civil and sympathetic and eager to be helpful; they all thought it natural that mother should be anxious, but refused to credit for an instant that anything could have happened to Joan.

"That baby!" urged the curate. "Why, my dear lady, Joan is better known hereabouts than King George himself. No one could take her a mile without having to answer questions. I don't know what's

He went stalking mightily among the ferns. "It was *'ere* she went?" he inquired.—Page 228.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

keeping her, but you may be sure she's all right."

"'Course she is," chorused the others, swinging their sticks light-heartedly. "'Course she's all right."

"Get her for me, then," said mother. "I don't want to be silly and you're awfully good. But I must have her; I must have her. I—I want her."

The squire's sons turned as if on an order and went toward the wood. The curate lingered a moment. He was a huge youth, an athlete and a gentleman, and his hard, clean-shaven face could be kind and serious.

"We're sure to get her," he said, in lower tones. "And you must help us with your faith and courage. Can you?"

Mother's hand tightened on that of Joyce.

"We are doing our best," she said, and smiled—she smiled! The curate nodded and went his way to the wood.

A little later in the afternoon came Colonel Warden, the lord and master of all the police in the county, a gay, trim soldier whom the children knew and liked. With him, in his big automobile, were more policemen and a pair of queer liver-colored dogs, all baggy skin and bleary eyes—blood-hounds! Joyce felt that this really must settle it. Actual living blood-hounds would be more than a match for Joan. Colonel Warden was sure of it too.

"Saves time," he was telling mother, in his high snappy voice. "Shows us which way she's gone, you know. Best hounds in the country, these two; never known 'em fail yet."

The dogs were limp and quiet as he led them through the wood, strange ungainly mechanisms which a whiff of a scent could set in motion. A pinafore which Joan had worn at breakfast was served to them for an indication of the work they had to do; they snuffed at it languidly for some seconds. Then the colonel unleashed them.

Best hounds in the country, these two.

They smelled round and about like any other dogs for a while, till one of them lifted his great head and uttered a long moaning cry. Then, noses down, the men running behind them, they set off across the ferns. Mother, still holding Joyce's hand, followed. The hounds made a straight line for the wood at the point at which Joan had entered it, slid in like frogs into water, while the men dodged and crashed after them. Joyce and mother came up with them at a place where the bushes stood back, enclosing a little quiet space of turf that lay open to the sky. The hounds were here, one lying down and scratching himself, the other nosing casually and clearly without interest about him.

"Dash it all," the colonel was saying; "she can't—she simply can't have been kidnapped in a balloon."

They tried the hounds again and again, always with the same result. They ran their line to the same spot unhesitatingly, and then gave up as though the scent went no further. Nothing could induce them to hunt beyond it.

"I can't understand this," said Colonel Warden, dragging at his mustache. "This is queer." He stood glancing around him as though the shrubs and trees had suddenly become enemies.

The search was still going on when the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The hounds were here, one lying down, the other nosing casually without interest about him.—Page 230.

time came for Joyce to go to bed. It had spread from the wood across the fields, reinforced by scores of sturdy volunteers, and automobiles had puffed away to thread the mesh of little lanes that covered the country-side. Joyce found it all terribly exciting. Fear for Joan she felt not at all.

"I know inside myself," she told mother, "right down deep in the middle of me, that Joan's all right."

"Bless you, my chick," said poor mother. "I wish I could feel like that. Go to bed now, like a good girl."

There was discomfort in the sight of Joan's railed cot standing empty in the night nursery, but Joyce was tired and had scarcely begun to be touched by it before she was asleep. She had a notion that during the night mother came in more than once, and she had a vague dream, too, all about Joan and wood-ladies, of which she could not remember much when she woke up. Joan was always dressed first in the morning, being the younger of the pair, but now there was no Joan and nurse was very gentle with Joyce and looked tired and as if she had been crying.

Mother was not to be seen that morning; she had been up all night, "till she broke down, poor thing," said nurse, and Joyce was bidden to amuse herself quietly in the nursery. But mother was about again at lunch-time when Joyce went down to the dining-room. She was very pale and her eyes looked black and deep, and somehow she seemed suddenly smaller and younger, more nearly Joyce's age, than ever before. They kissed each other and the child would have tried to comfort.

"No," said mother, shaking her head. "No, dear. Don't let's be sorry for each other yet. It would be like giving up hope. And we haven't done that, have we?"

"*I* haven't," said Joyce. "I *know* it's all right."

After lunch—again mother said she wouldn't be hungry till Joan came home—they went out together. There were no searches now in the wood and the gar-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In a moment she was kneeling on the ground with her arms round the baby.

den was empty; the police had left no inch unscanned and they were away, combing the country-side and spreading terror among the tramps. The sun was strong upon the lawn and the smell of the roses was heavy on the air; across the hedge the land rolled away to clear perspectives of peace and beauty.

"Let's walk up and down," suggested mother. "Anything's better than sitting still. And don't talk, chick—not just now."

They paced the length of the lawn, from the cedar to the gate which led to the wood, perhaps a dozen times, hand in hand and in silence. It was while their backs were turned to the wood that they heard the gate click, and faced about to see who was coming. A blue-sleeved arm thrust the gate open and there advanced into the sunlight, coming forth from the shadow as from a doorway—Joan! Her round baby face, with the sleek brown hair over it, the massive infantile body, the sturdy bare legs, confronted them serenely. Mother uttered a deep sigh—it sounded like that—and in a moment she was kneeling on the ground with her arms round the baby.

"Joan, Joan," she said, over and over again. "My little, little baby!"

Joan struggled in her embrace till she got an arm free and then rubbed her eyes drowsily.

"Hallo!" she said.

"But where have you been?" cried mother. "Baby-girl, where have you been all this time?"

Joan made a motion of her head and her free arm toward the wood, the wood which had been searched a dozen times over like a pocket. "In there," she answered carelessly. "Wiv the wood-ladies. I'm hungry!"

"My darling!" said mother, and picked her up and carried her into the house.

In the dining-room, with mother at her side and Joyce opposite to her, Joan fell to her food in her customary workmanlike fashion, and between helpings answered questions in a fashion which only served to darken the mystery of her absence.

"But there aren't any wood-ladies really, darling," remonstrated mother.

"There is," said Joan. "There's lots. They wanted to keep me but I wouldn't

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stay. So I comed home, 'cause I was hungry."

"But," began mother, "where did they take you to?" she asked.

"I don't know," said Joan. "The one what I went to speak to gave me her hand and tooked me to where there was more of them. It was a place in the wood wiv grass to sit on and bushes all round, and they gave me dead flowers to play wiv. Howwid old dead flowers!"

"Yes?" said mother. "What else?"

"There was anuvver little girl there," went on Joan. "Not a wood-lady, but a girl like me, what they'd tooked from somewhere. She was wearing a greeny sort of dress like they was, and they wanted me to put one on too. But I wouldn't."

"Why wouldn't you?" asked Joyce.

"'Cause I didn't want to be a wood-lady," replied Joan.

"Listen to me, darling," said mother. "Didn't these people whom you call wood-ladies take you away out of the wood? We searched the whole wood, you know, and you weren't there at all."

"I was," said Joan. "I was there all the time an' I heard Walter an' Jenks calling. I cocked a snook at them an' the wood-ladies laughed like leaves rustling."

"But where did you sleep last night?"

"I didn't sleep," said Joan, grasping her spoon anew. "I'se very sleepy now."

She was asleep as soon as they laid her in bed, and mother and Joyce looked at each other across her cot, above her rosy and unconscious face.

"God help us," said mother, in a whisper. "What is the truth of this?"

There was never any answer, any hint of a solution, save Joan's. And she, as soon as she discovered that her experiences amounted to an adventure, began to embroider them, and now she does not even know herself. She has reached the age of seven, and it is long since she has believed in anything so childish as wood-ladies.

In the dining-room, with mother at her side, Joan fell to her food in her customary fashion.—Page 232.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PAGAN

By Gordon Arthur Smith

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALONZO KIMBALL

WHEN Maxime Taillandy, senior partner of the firm of Taillandy, Mason & Co., had settled himself comfortably in his bed to die he summoned to him Peter Mason, the son of the junior partner. Previously, devout Catholic that he was, he had summoned a priest. Peter was an American lawyer in his thirties whom the firm employed to extricate it from legal entanglements, both in New York and in Paris, for the company was international and not averse from making money on both sides of the Atlantic.

Maxime Taillandy, having lived honestly though successfully for threescore years and ten, was not afraid to die. If he regretted anything it was perhaps the fact that he was dying in the midst of the firm's most prosperous year; since the firm was to him as a babe to its mother—it had been born of his brain and fed by his hands; he had tended it in its illnesses and had rejoiced in its health.

Thus it followed that his daughter, Marthe, although she kept his house and shared his meals, was almost a stranger to him, while Peter Mason, on the contrary, inasmuch as he was intimately connected with the firm and its fortunes, stood well-nigh as his son.

"Peter," said Taillandy, from his huge, canopied bed, "I have several things to say before I become silent forever. God has granted me a long life and a prosperous one, and a clear brain at the last. Also, I am dying at home and I shall breathe with my last breath the air of my beautiful France. For all this I am thankful. Nevertheless, few of us can leave this pleasant world without an anxious thought or two for the future of the persons and things that have been dear to us."

The old man paused, and Peter, finding no reply, nodded sympathetically.

"Peter," Taillandy went on after a little, "I once had a son. You did not know that, did you? Few do. He was not like me—on the contrary, where I was black he was white, and where I was white he was black. Between us we could have made a chess-board of virtues and vices, and never have found ourselves on the same square. His virtues were his mother's—whom may the saints cherish in heaven! The poetry that she thought and dreamed he wrote down with pen and ink; the love of the beautiful that God deals sparingly to his creatures God gave in abundance to him. Tempestuous he was, yet gentle; self-indulgent, yet inspired. There—perhaps you have guessed his name. Six years ago it was one of the greatest in France."

Peter hesitated.

"Not Ferdinand Taillandy?" he said.

"Himself," replied the old man.

Peter was not compelled to strain his memory, for, unbidden, the names of two great poems came to his lips and he uttered them aloud.

"*Le Triomphe de l'Amour* and *Le Tombeau de l'Amour*," he said.

"Yes," answered Taillandy, and his voice was full of bitterness; "they well-nigh tell a story, those two titles, do they not? What is this love but a serpent that we clasp to our breasts only to have it sting us? It was the usual tale; so commonplace that we have come to shrug and to smile when it is told us. He fell in love with a beautiful girl—ah, but she was beautiful, and gentle—and I think she loved him after her fashion. Her great-grandfather had been brave with Bonaparte and had been made a baron. My son's great-grandfather, you see, was a peasant of Dijon and he, too, had fought under Bonaparte; but an Austrian had split his skull with a sabre at Austerlitz before the little Corsican could reward him. And so we are not of the nobility. Her parents opposed the match, for they were seeking more than my son had to offer. She gave him up without a struggle

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and scarce a tear, and he—his tears are all in that last poem of his, in every line, in every word!"

The old man choked and stopped. Peter waited quietly.

"I have not seen my son for six years," Taillandy continued, "but I believe that he is alive. When he left us he said that he was going to see if life was not something better than an ill-natured practical joke on man. Let me see—he was then thirty-one years old. Now he would be thirty-seven; just your age, Peter."

"You have not corresponded with him? He has written no one?" asked Peter.

"Not for six years—six years," he repeated slowly. "Six years is a long time, Peter; it seems a lifetime when one has but six days or six hours left to live."

"Ah," said Peter, "but you are not as near the end as that"—and then he stopped, for he saw that his encouragement was useless. A spasm of pain had shaken the old man's body, and dimly the spark of life shone in his eyes. That he had more to say was evident. The nurse poured a stimulant into a glass and held it to his lips. He continued haltingly, with great effort:

"You must find my son, Peter. I have left him all my fortune; all but enough to keep Marthe comfortably. If you can't find him within a year—if he is dead—it all goes to you. You are to marry Marthe and become a member of the firm. It is in my will—I will it so. You understand? That is all."

His head fell back on the pillow, but his lips still moved. Peter leaned close to hear his last words.

"Peter—they are cheating us on those silks from Lyons—the last ones—low quality——"

And so he died.

II

After Taillandy's funeral a perturbed conference was held in his dark, echoing house in the rue de Grenelle. Maître Baresse, Taillandy's personal lawyer, was explaining to those directly concerned the terms of the will. Tension was in the air. Even Maître Baresse had permitted himself to express a regret that the document should be so quixotic.

"It is a little of the Middle Ages," was the phrase he had used.

His audience consisted of but two people, Marthe Taillandy and Peter Mason, and of the two Peter was the more confused, for Marthe was blessed with a temperament that enabled her to believe that everything was invariably for the best. At twenty-four she had the sturdy cheerfulness that is the dowry of every normal Frenchwoman.

"Thus," concluded Maître Baresse, "you perceive that in any case Mlle. Marthe receives the house and an annuity of twenty-five thousand francs. Monsieur Mason is to be paid the sum of sixty thousand francs at once to meet the expenses he will incur during the year in the search for young Monsieur Ferdinand Taillandy, whom I may designate as the heir to the residue of his father's fortune of twelve million francs. Should, however, the heir not be found or not present properly and in due form his claim within one year, the aforesaid twelve millions go to Monsieur Mason, but upon a condition: that he first marry Mlle. Marthe and enter as a partner into the firm of Taillandy, Mason & Co. May I remark, Monsieur Mason," the little old lawyer continued, peering at the American through watery eyes, "may I remark that this clause, especially, indicates either the remarkable trust reposed in you by the late Monsieur Taillandy or else the lamentable condition of his brain preceding his death?"

"You may so remark," returned Peter dryly.

Maître Baresse cleared his throat and resumed. "There is a final clause," he said, "which applies only in case Monsieur Ferdinand Taillandy should not be found and in case no marriage should be arranged between Monsieur Mason and Mlle. Marthe, as mentioned before. In such circumstances the twelve million francs go entirely and unreservedly to Mlle. Marthe. Have I made myself clear? I trust so. First, Monsieur Ferdinand; then, if Monsieur Ferdinand be not found, Monsieur Mason on condition that he marries Mlle. Marthe——"

"Poor Peter," said Marthe, speaking for the first time since the lawyer had held the floor. "Poor Peter, what a price father is making you pay to become his heir."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Nonsense," said Peter, flushing. "There is no question of that. Your brother is certainly alive, and it remains but to find him. Your brother once found, the will is reasonable and precise."

"Yes," said Marthe, "the complications would arise only upon failure to find him."

"There shall be no such failure," said Peter sturdily.

"I felicitate you, monsieur, on your generous attitude," said Maître Baresse, rising painfully to his feet. "It remains for me now but to bid you *au revoir* and *bonne chance*. This has been a very sad affair for all of us—especially for you, Mlle. Marthe—and the added factor of this—er—fanciful testament is not the least of the disturbing elements. If I can be of any further assistance—my card. Allow me. Good day."

"Thank heaven!" said Peter, when the door had closed behind the back of the lawyer's shiny coat. "Thank heaven, we are rid of him. Now, Marthe, perhaps you and I can come to some conclusions. Have you any proposal to make?"

"That," said marthe, smiling, "is for you to do if you want the twelve million."

Peter's face became very serious.

"Has it occurred to you," he said, "that the conditions of this will are most annoying?"

"Why?" asked Marthe.

"Suppose," said Peter, "that we do not find your brother within a year."

"Suppose we do not," replied Marthe; "what then?"

"Then," said Peter, "why then the twelve million is to go to me——"

"Not unless you marry me first," corrected Marthe smoothly.

"Just so," said Peter; "you see the difficulty?"

"The difficulty!" echoed Marthe. "What difficulty? Don't you want to marry me? Wouldn't you marry me for twelve million francs?"

Peter blushed mightily.

"You *know* I want to marry you, Marthe," he said. "I have told you that often enough, long before I was offered twelve million to do it. That is just the difficulty—that from now on I am being offered twelve million to do it."

"I see," said Marthe. "You mean that you feel you are being bribed. I should hate to have you stop proposing, Peter; but perhaps," she continued, visibly amused, "perhaps father knew what was best."

"It's monstrous," Peter cried. "Of course your father did it for the sake of the firm. I know that he wanted the company that bore his name to grow, to expand, to advance—to live long after he and his children and their children had ceased to live. But me—why did he choose me? He leaves me in such a position that I cannot ask you to marry me without apparently reaching for the twelve million."

"If my brother is not found and if I should refuse to marry you," said Marthe, "why, then, the money is mine, is it not?"

"Certainly," said Peter.

Marthe laughed.

"How amusing," she said. "Don't you see that in such a case I could not refuse any offer of marriage you might make to me without appearing to be greedy for the twelve million for myself?"

Peter stared.

"By the gods," he said slowly, "that's true. I had not thought of that."

"So you see, Peter," she continued, "there is only one solution, we must find my brother Ferdinand. Otherwise I should feel honor-bound to marry you."

"Yes," said Peter, "we *must*. Otherwise I should feel honor-bound not to ask you."

III

ALL the usual machinery employed in tracing lost persons was at once put into motion: advertisements in most of the papers of France and in many foreign ones; rewards for news of the missing man; a corps of detectives who promised much, hinted much, speculated much, suspected much, and accomplished nothing.

Thus, with no progress to report, winter melted to spring and spring warmed to summer and autumn was upon them. In the end it remained for luck and Peter, abetted by a suggestion from Marthe, to hit upon the one clew that was obtained.

The suggestion emanated from Marthe in this wise. It was a bronze October day, and she and Peter were walking

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

together in the Avenue du Bois. Often they had dared this, for Marthe had no one to elude but a myopic spinster aunt; and Peter, being an American, thought nothing of conventions.

It was October, I have said, and cold, with a sharp little breeze that whipped Marthe's skirts about in a lively fashion, and roused bright color to her cheeks, and drove reluctant clouds pell-mell across a serene sky like fat, rollicking white puppies. Peter did not fail to observe that Marthe looked very charming in the wind.

"Peter," said she, half-way to the Bois, "we are not progressing. Something radical must be done."

"Right," said Peter; "but what?"

"I have been thinking," replied Marthe, "of the places my brother used to frequent before he left us. Every true Frenchman, you know, has his café, and I seem to remember that Ferdinand's was called the *Lilas* and was on the Boulevard du Montparnasse. Is it not just possible that there you might meet some of his old-time cronies who could give you some hint?"

"It is worth trying," said Peter. "What sort of folk go there?"

"Artists and writers in embryo, and men with dreams or ambitions or both."

"I have both," said Peter. And he went.

He went not only once but several times, and each time he came away empty-handed; which was not strange. Still he persevered, for the little café came to exert a certain fascination over him. It seemed to him to be the Ararat of a world flooded with lost illusions. Here, as Marthe had indicated, was genius in embryo and youth to whom no tradition was too sacred to be shattered. One day he was rewarded.

He had seated himself at a marble-topped table, where the smoke was thickest, ordered a *vermouth à l'eau*, and started to look about him. On his right *écarté* was being played by two and watched by half a dozen unkempt, bearded artists. On his left it was backgammon. The odor of French tobacco was everywhere. Opposite, across the narrow room, he noticed a gaunt, sallow young fellow with something of the glint of genius in his eyes and a toothpick in his mouth. He was haranguing a group of painters and writers, using many superlatives and a liberal allowance of gesture; and his audience expressed their approval as often as he paused for applause. Soon his voice rose above the ordinary murmur of conversation, and his fist banged the clattering table-top as he emphasized his climax.

"*C'est du chiqué*," he cried; "*c'est du chiqué!* All—all of it is a fraud! All of it is gilded papier-maché. Literature and art, too, I tell you, are ruined by your realists, your naturalists, your symbolists. You here, Baptiste, you that call yourself a realist, what good have you accomplished; what can you point to? Double species of idiot, you have studied the dirt in the streets when you might have been studying the stars in the skies; you have wallowed in filth—realistic filth, if you will—when you should have been seeking nymphs in the glades and listening to the pipes of Pan. What we must do to save ourselves is to revert. To romanticism? No; too sickly sweet. To classicism? No, not quite; too artificial, too severe. To paganism? Yes! a thousand times, yes! There and only there do we see Beauty naked but unashamed. The worship of Beauty, of beauty in the sky, in the hills, in the waters, in the trees, in the eyes of women, and in the hearts of men. Gautier approached it in 'Mlle. de Maupin'; an Englishman, Swinburne, came nearer; and one of us, I tell you, one of us was almost at the goal when his light was extinguished. Yes, Ferdinand Taillandy, had he stayed with us, would have been the leader of the greatest school of literature the world has known."

There was a moment of silence succeeding this grandiloquent oration, and then Peter's right-hand neighbor, he who was playing at *écarté*, said with sincerity and real feeling: "*Ce pauvre Ferdinand!* We miss him much, we who knew and loved him."

It was Peter's opportunity; a better he could not have wished for. Turning to his neighbor he said in his excellent French: "Monsieur, you will pardon, I trust, the interruption of a stranger, but I read in the earnestness of your tone a true regard for Ferdinand Taillandy."

"But, yes," said the other, "you have reason to say it, monsieur."

"I myself," said Peter, "while not one

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of his family, share their interest and anxiety with regard to his whereabouts; for his father, dying, employed his last breath to urge me to bring back his son into the world. You have doubtless seen the advertisements and the rewards. They have been useless, all useless. It is eight months that we have been seeking him in vain, and I no longer know what to do or where to turn; so I came in here to-day, knowing that here he also had been accustomed to come and hoping to meet some one of his friends who might help me. Am I to be disappointed? Is there nothing you can tell me?"

The man shook his head sadly.

"No, monsieur," he said, "I am afraid I can tell you nothing. None of us here know anything that could be of help to you. But stop! Have you seen Germaine D'Arcy, of the Théâtre des Capucines? No? *Eh bien*, it is just possible that if you approached her tactfully and delicately she could tell you more than any one else in Paris. She used to come here with him often toward the last, when he was desperate, you know. I believe she is the only person in the city who knows where he disappeared to."

"Germaine D'Arcy?" repeated Peter.

"Yes," said the other dryly; "her name describes her. When Taillandy first knew her she was a *couturière* and was called Zizi; but you had best not remind her of those days: '*autre temps, autres mœurs.*'"

"I understand," said Peter gratefully; "you mean she has prospered since then?"

"Exactly," replied the other; "she has triumphed completely. But she has forgotten us, her old friends, and her father is still a floor-walker at the Bon-Marché."

Peter thanked him profusely, paid his check, and left.

"Well," he said to himself, as he blinked in the bright sunlight outside, "it seems as though the great paganist school of literature might recover its leader after all; for to-morrow I hitch my wagon to a star—of the Théâtre des Capucines."

IV

Mlle. Germaine D'Arcy was accustomed to see her name in twelve-inch letters on the Paris bill-boards. She was one of a score of *artistes* (the term is flattering) who have risen to glory by means of a taking face and a speaking leg. She could not act nor sing nor dance. Dance?—she could not have bent to fasten her slipper, but she possessed what the French call *la ligne*. Also she had been frequently photographed; she had worn the right clothes at Chantilly and at Longchamps, and she had advertised and recommended every known toilet article but a safety razor. Nevertheless, or perhaps therefore, Germaine D'Arcy was nobody's fool.

Peter, not being to that manner born, was somewhat at a loss how he might best approach her. Finally, abandoning better but more complicated methods of attack, he presented himself at the Théâtre des Capucines after the evening performance and, having scribbled "Crazy American Millionaire" on his card, sent it back to Mlle. D'Arcy. After an impressive interval he was admitted to the presence of the Queen.

Germaine was seated at her dressing-table, clad in yellow silk and much white lace. She was removing her stage make-up, and Peter was vouchsafed only a view of her back as she leaned toward her mirror, patting her face with tapering, white fingers—fingers so patrician as to be constant negations of her plebeian birth.

"Give yourself the pain to sit down," she said without turning. "I shall be ready suddenly. You see I speak the English."

"Astoundingly," said Peter, and seated himself gingerly on an inefficient Empire chair.

A neat maid appeared, silks rustled, laces flounced, slim arms clutched the air, a thousand hooks clicked merrily, and Germaine arose, dressed, radiant, and smiling. She held out her left hand, heavy with pearls, and said brightly: "Supper?"

"Ah," said Peter gallantly, "do goddesses eat? How banal!"

"Dancing gives me the appetite," she replied with a smile that did credit to her dentifrice.

Since she considered supper inevitable, Peter took her to the Abbaye, a small restaurant in the Place Pigalle, all green and white and electric-light color. Crowds were seated at the tables along the *ban-*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Drawn by Alonzo Kimball.

"By the way, Zizi, what do you hear from our friend Ferdinand Taillandy?"—Page 240.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quettes and in the middle of the room; white shoulders and whiter shirt-fronts gleamed through tobacco smoke; more crowds at the entrance waiting for tables; waiters jostling indiscriminately; fantastically dressed dancing girls, brandishing silken legs and singing to castanets; frantic, red-coated Hungarian musicians, pounding and scraping at delirious strings, and an all-pervading odor of smoke, of champagne, and of expensive perfumes.

Peter smiled grimly.

"This," said he to himself, "is not quite the place I should have chosen for my purpose, and yet——?"

Mlle. Germaine D'Arcy obtained a table immediately. Mr. Peter Mason might have emptied his pockets in vain bribes; for the rule at the Abbaye is "No favoritism except to the favorites."

If the lady beside him entertained any curiosity as to Peter or as to his motives in presenting himself, she did not choose to betray it. Their conversation at first dwelt mainly on what they should eat and drink. Germaine ordered fastidiously and superciliously, choosing by instinct or by experience the more expensive dishes, and Peter could not but note, with some amusement, that she ate enormously and with little skill. Her Junoesque eyes travelled incessantly about the room, and she bowed and smiled to several celebrities. Princes and poets bowed low in return. The more recognition she received the more condescending did her manner toward Peter become, until in some mysterious way she managed to convey to him the feeling that she considered him socially her inferior. With pains she named to him her acquaintances: the Prince of Beringen-Schönberg; the Conte Montalbi; René de Coucy, the famous young dramatist; the Marquis de la Croix-Argentin; Henri Saint-Giseaux, who made the champagne they were drinking, and so forth, *et cetera*.

At length, from being overbored, Peter became vexed. He played his ace of trumps and waited to take the trick.

"By the way," he said in French, lazily and casually; "by the way, Zizi, what do you hear from our friend Ferdinand Taillandy?"

A large slice of a large pear, half-way to Germaine's mouth, never reached its destination; and Germaine's doll-like eyes narrowed with suspicion not unmixed with anger. She directed one sharp glance at Peter and then kept her eyes from his face. Her reply, when it came, was concise.

"Mon Dieu," she said, "you certainly *are* a crazy American millionaire."

"Am I not?" said Peter smoothly; and then, after a silence: "Do you never regret those days of the *Lilas—sans princes et sans perles?*"

For a brief moment Germaine's rouge was superfluous.

"Why did you not tell me at once that you were one of us—that you knew Ferdinand?"

"Because," said Peter, "I knew better."

"You think I would have refused to see you, refused to talk with you?"

"I do," said Peter.

Germaine nodded her head slowly.

"You were right," she said. "Nevertheless, I was very fond of Ferdinand; he was different from these others. He was a great poet and yet he had a *chic*—he was presentable. I have met but few clever men who dress themselves well. It is strange, is it not?"

"Wrinkles in the brow and in the clothes go hand in hand," said Peter.

"What?" said Germaine. "Oh, never mind; do not explain it. What was I saying? Oh, yes—*ce pauvre Ferdinand*. He would not have enjoyed it here. He liked better the *Lilas*, where every one was a friend. Do you remember the way he used to pound on the table for my beer? *'Garçon, une brune pour cette petite blonde!'* I always drank dark beer, you see, and my hair was quite golden then. But you?—I do not remember you. Did you go there often?"

"No," said Peter, "I have been there very seldom; but I am very anxious to help Ferdinand. You know, of course, that there is twelve million francs waiting for him to claim?"

"Yes," replied Germaine; "I have heard."

"Well, he has not appeared to claim it. We have been searching for him for eight—nearly nine months now. We do not know if he is alive. Can you help us?"

Germaine was silent.

"If he wants the twelve million," she

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A shabby-looking person, having appropriated the other half of the bench, was sprawling luxuriously in his seat, his long, lean legs stretched out straight in front of him.—Page 242.

said at length, "why does he not come forward and claim it? He must have seen your advertisements."

"Yes," replied Peter, "if he is alive. But is he alive?"

"I do not know—how should I know?" she said quickly. Then, apparently veering, she added: "Yes, he is alive. At least, he was two weeks ago."

Peter was at some pains not to betray his pleasure. "And where is he, then?" he asked.

"Oh," Germaine continued, "I will tell you all I know because I hope it will benefit him. Only I do not want you to think that you have been exceptionally clever; that would be a mistake. No, I tell you of my own free will. Also, will you order me a *pêche Melba?* I have a little hunger still. Yes, Ferdinand is of the sort who

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should have money. For six years, now, he has lived on nothing—almost nothing. He has written to me once every month during those six years. I don't know why; perhaps he likes me. Never has he allowed me to write to him; never has he given me an address. But I have followed him by the post-marks on the envelopes. Wherever he goes he walks, and in those six years he has been to Austria, to Germany, to Greece, to Italy, and just now to Spain. He is writing an epic; I do not know what that is, but I think it is poetry. He is sometimes very droll. He says he is seeking the gods in their own haunts—in the forests, he means, and in the streams, and the oceans. Constantly he is talking about these gods and goddesses: Jupiter and Neptune, and, of course, that marble one in the Louvre—in the Musée, I mean, not in the Grand Magazin. Especially, though, he mentions one woman—Diana. 'Some day,' he says, 'I, too, like Actæon, shall surprise her bathing.' He is like that. Often I cannot understand what he means. Now he is walking from Spain along through France by the Mediterranean. The last letter I received, two weeks ago, was from Marseilles. By now he should be in the Riviera. You might find him there. That is all I know—all I can tell you."

"I am very, very grateful," said Peter. "Won't you have another peach?"

"No," said Germaine; "I am *complet*. I hope you will find him. He deserves to be rich, and it may help him with his epic."

"It may," said Peter. "And now," he went on, "there is one thing more, if you will pardon me for mentioning money in your presence. A substantial reward has been offered for information leading to the discovery of Ferdinand. This, of course, will be yours if I succeed now in tracing him."

"How much is it?" asked Germaine.

"Twenty thousand francs."

She smiled abstractedly, playing with the rings on her hands.

"Mon Dieu," she replied, with a shrug; "I have that much on my little finger."

V

Peter went to Monte Carlo. What perhaps was strange was that Marthe and her myopic aunt went, too.

"I can be useful," Marthe declared, "in detecting impostors. You have never seen Ferdinand; I have."

The myopic aunt went apparently because she had to; but inwardly she had a longing to play the red and double. She had never gambled before.

During the first month of their stay Peter saw a score of Ferdinand Taillandys, none of whom, however, finally proved satisfactory. At first he was cautious and discreet, employing many circumlocutions in snaring his prey; but later, becoming reckless, he startled several honest, God-fearing people by asking them point-blank if they were not the missing poet. One or two, who had heard of the waiting fortune, acknowledged that they were, and it remained for Marthe to assure them of their mistake.

The end of the year brought with it the anniversary of old Taillandy's death, and his son was still at large. It was actually on the last day of the term that Peter believed that he had finally discovered the elusive heir. It happened thus:

Peter, after a hasty glance through the gambling-rooms, had gone out to the sunny terrace behind the Casino to smoke in peace a long cigar. He settled himself on a bench and blinked happily in the sunlight. The air came fresh and salt off the sea, which rose beneath him, a mass of gleaming lazulite, to meet the sky at the unbroken bow of the horizon. Peter sat back and enjoyed it, and tainted the breeze with his cigar.

Then some one spoke at his elbow.

"Leisure for meditation," some one said, "is the greatest gift the gods have to bestow. You, monsieur, I perceive, are unusually blessed."

Peter turned to find that a shabby-looking person, having appropriated the other half of the bench, was sprawling luxuriously in his seat, his long, lean legs stretched out straight in front of him and a cigarette held debonairly in a pair of nicotine-stained fingers. He was dressed in an ill-fitting, much-patched brown suit, which hung on his lank frame in baggy folds and creases. His left hand was thrust deep in his trousers pocket, and his coat, being thus thrown back, revealed a blue corduroy waistcoat held together precariously by occasional vermilion but-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tons. His cravat, of green silk, was knotted around a low, soft collar, immaculately white. A gray felt hat was perched jauntily on one side of his head, and through a jagged hole in its crown Peter could see a tangle of hair, black as an Indian's, one lock of which hung down straight over his right eyebrow.

"You are regarding my hat with ill-concealed admiration, I perceive. Doubtless you are amazed at such excessive ventilation, which, though not strictly fashionable, is excellent for the hair. Men wear hats in order to remove them for women. I know no women, so I compromise."

Peter regarded the man blankly. He was speaking excellent English, with scarcely enough French accent to proclaim his nationality. His linen, his hands, and his speech argued for his refinement, and a glance at his face confirmed it. A thin, delicate nose; a pair of brown eyes, rather dull and listless, and hinting at suffering undergone; heavy, black brows; a sensitive mouth, curved crookedly in an amused smile, which displayed his regular, white teeth; a narrow, pointed chin projecting somewhat like that of the notorious Punch—all set in a thin, drawn face, high as to cheek-bones, and bronzed as dark as an Arab's.

Peter checked his first impulse to rise and leave. Later he was exceedingly glad that he had done so. He murmured something to the effect that, since it was his first trip to Monte Carlo, he was taking advantage of a leisure hour to admire the view from the terrace. The other stopped him with a motion of his hand.

"Why explain?" he said. "You Anglo-Saxons are curious people; you actually are ashamed to be idle—physically idle, I mean. Does it never occur to you that thinking is a praiseworthy occupation? 'Man is of the earth, but his thoughts are with the stars.' Did not your Carlyle say that? Ah, there was a man who knew how to think!"

"Are you fond of Carlyle's work?" asked practical Peter, amazed.

"Am I fond of Carlyle's work!" the other echoed. "Is one *fond* of the 'Odyssey' of Homer, the 'Hermes' of Praxiteles, or the 'Tristan' of Wagner? You have ill-chosen your verb. Carlyle was a man of beautiful mind, of beautiful thoughts, just as were Homer and Praxiteles and Wagner. I do not mean by that that they saw everything the color of roses; rather do I mean that they saw the truth and that the gods gave them the power to reveal its beauty."

"I see," said Peter vaguely.

"Yes," the other continued, "the beauty of truth and the truth of Beauty; they are two strings that have been much fiddled on, but they are still a-tune. Poor Beauty—she is becoming a shy goddess since the days of this—" and he waved a contemptuous hand toward the Casino.

"Surely," said Peter, "there is beauty spread lavishly enough before us even here. What of the sea?"

"Truly," said the other, "there is beauty in the sea. Are not half a hundred Nereids there to keep it smiling? But one's soul must be in tune if the chords are to ring true. Do you know what it is to be out of tune with beauty? It is to have faith, hope, happiness, ambition, and love turn to gray ashes in your heart. Six years ago that happened to me in a day. The senses that the gods give to poets in their fullest perfection were torn from me. The sun coming up in the morning, yonder in the east, trailing its delicate, golden-edged clouds like a gypsy's veils; the surge of the sea, the voices of the birds, the eternal song of Nature; the scent of the roses climbing smilingly about the stucco walls—the three senses on which my very existence had depended, sight, hearing, and smell, were powerless to quicken my heart. That was six years ago. My mind lay paralyzed and my soul lay dead. Poetry—bah! I crucified my talent."

He paused and a soft land breeze, bearing the sound of violins from the plaza, stirred the palms and the plane-trees in the groves behind them. From below rose the incessant wash of the sea.

When he spoke again all the bitterness had left his voice.

"At first," he said, "I lived in a dream. Animal-like, I shunned the cities and sought the open to breathe. Gradually Nature drew me to her and soothed me. I rested in the groves where the Dryads played; I bathed in the streams of the Naiads; I hunted in the forests of Artemis and Pan played to me on his pipes. And

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one day I drank of the spring of the Camenæ and, behold, they gave me back my gift. Is there not an epic there?—something regained that is perhaps greater than paradise?"

At the mention of the epic Peter's suspicions were transmuted to certainty. His pulses pounded wildly with excitement.

"Do you never read the newspapers?" he cried.

The poet regarded him quizzically.

"I am sorry I have bored you," he said, and rose as though to move away.

"No, no," said Peter; "I must ask you to pardon me. You misunderstand."

"You asked me if I ever read the newspapers, did you not? I fail to see any relevance, but if you desire an answer; no, I do not."

"I did not intend to be rude," said Peter hurriedly; "indeed, I have the keenest interest in all that you have been telling me. May I add that I think I know your name? Are you not Ferdinand Taillandy?"

"I am," said the other; "and what then?"

"Then," cried Peter triumphantly; "then, may I shake your hand? You are the man I have been looking for for twelve months."

"You may shake my hand with pleasure," said the poet, "if that will console you for having wasted a year of your life. I am scarcely worth it."

"My dear man," exclaimed Peter, "you are worth twelve million."

"Twelve million what?" asked the other.

"Francs," said Peter.

The poet shrugged his shoulders and asked for further enlightenment. Peter was ten minutes explaining, while the other listened unmoved.

"What should I do with twelve million francs?" he inquired at the end. "Suppose I refuse them; what becomes of them then?"

"Then," said Peter, embarrassed, "they go to me on certain conditions."

"In that case," said the poet, "you would appear to be an honest man. You are actually pleased to have found me and to lose a fortune thereby. I congratulate you and I congratulate myself, for Diogenes would have envied me exceedingly. It is a delight to know that the virtues still exist among mortals who live in cities. And now, my friend," he continued, "what is it you wish me to do? You wish me first, I take it, to see my sister. Where is she?"

"At the Hôtel de Paris," said Peter.

"Ah, yes," mused the other; "purple and fine linen. You perceive how impossible it would be for me? I wear clothes because the law requires it, and I prize my liberty; but you see what they are——?"

"That," said Peter hastily, "is the least of difficulties," and he pressed a bank-note into the other's hand.

"After all, it is yours, you see," he explained; "and in Monte Carlo you can at least find clothes. Everything is for sale in Monte Carlo."

The poet hesitated a while, and then thrust the note into a pocket of his ragged coat.

"You are right," he said; "in Monte Carlo everything is for sale." And he added bitterly: "Everything—even a man's freedom."

Peter, bursting with his discovery, sought Marthe wildly about the hotel and the gambling-rooms, to find her at last, in company with the myopic aunt, sipping *citronnades* through hygienic straws on the terrace of the Café de Paris.

"He is found," cried Peter from afar, waving his hat. "There is no mistake this time."

"Bravo!" said Marthe coolly, for the same tale had been told before.

"I am so sorry," said the myopic aunt, peering at Peter through half an inch of glass lorgnon.

"He is charming," said Peter, torrential with news. "He is cultivated, refined, unworldly, intellectual——"

"Did you give him any money?" asked Marthe practically. Several of the self-acknowledged Ferdinands that Peter had discovered had received and spent considerable sums, borrowed from him on various pretexts, before Marthe had had a chance to disclaim relationship with them. Peter hesitated and blushed.

"You see," he said, "he was not very well dressed and, as he is to meet us here, I thought——"

"Much?" asked Marthe, smiling.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"He didn't want to accept it," said Peter, "but I forced a thousand francs on him for clothes and things, you know."

"Mon Dieu," exclaimed the myopic aunt, "a thousand francs! That is more than I have won on the red in four weeks."

"But," continued Peter, "there is no doubt this time—he had absolute proofs; and he told me all about himself before I hinted that I was looking for him."

"What did he tell you?" asked Marthe, still unconvinced.

"That he was writing a great epic poem; that he had been living away from the world for a long time; and then he talked a lot about those pagan gods of his, you know. Oh, he is genuine, right enough."

"Well," said Marthe, with a sigh, "I hope so, since this is the last day of the year. If he is not found to-day all that money is yours, Peter dear; that is, if you can make up your mind to marry me."

"Such a shame," said the myopic aunt; "but then, we will hope he is only another impostor."

"I hope no such thing," retorted Peter sturdily, "and I am sure he is not."

"How truly generous of you," sighed the myopic aunt. "And now I think that I shall leave you for a while. I *feel* that red is winning. How soon do you expect this person? In an hour? Well, I may be back."

"*Bonne chance*," said Marthe.

"It's that awful zero—" said the myopic aunt, shaking her head; and she collected her sack and her gloves and her parasol, and headed for the siren wheel.

"And now, Marthe," said Peter; "now that your brother is found, we are free. I am very glad; do you know how glad, Marthe?"

"Yes," said Marthe, playing nervously with the straws in her glass. "Yes, I know."

"If we had not found him," Peter went on, "it would have been horrible. As it is, I dare to tell you once more how much I love you, Marthe, and I can ask you to marry me with a clear conscience. Marthe, will you be my wife?"

"Peter," said Marthe slowly, "I would be your wife if your conscience were as black as the ace of spades. But you must not think that I do not appreciate how unselfish you have been. And Peter, dear, I think that father perhaps knew best—perhaps he was testing you. If he was you have won your degree *summa cum laude*," and she gave him her hand across the table.

"God bless you," said Peter, kissing her finger-tips. An interested waiter, counting his gains, forgot his figures and was forced to begin again. No one else noticed them.

As the afternoon advanced the tables about them filled rapidly with tea-drinking English and beer-drinking Germans; a red-coated orchestra appeared, to drown at intervals the babel of tongues; laughter mixed merrily with the tinkle of glasses; waiters sprang into life with flying napkins, and the air rose warm from the ground, sweet with the scent of the neighboring flower-beds. Slowly the sun moved down the sky toward the west and the red roofs of Monaco. And still no Taillandy.

Peter glanced nervously at his watch. Half past four.

"He is late," he said.

"Yes, dear," said Marthe; "it takes time to spend a thousand francs. But, doubtless, when he comes he will be very beautiful."

At five o'clock, like them of Darien, they gazed at each other with a wild surmise. In vain did Marthe strive to keep her laughter down. It rang free and unashamed; and soon Peter joined her rather hollowly.

"Never mind, Peter," said Marthe; "it is only another Taillandy unmasked. And it is the last impostor we shall meet."

"Yes," replied Peter grimly; "the last one."

"And Peter, dear, it is not going to change anything between you and me. I will not allow it to. Tell me that that conscience of yours is quiet. You did your best, Peter."

"Yes," said Peter; "I did my best."

"And you deserve to win," she said.

"I think," said Peter softly, "that I have won a saint."

"You have," said Marthe; "but your saint is filled with a very earthly love for this beautiful world and—for you."

Down the steps of the Casino and across the sun-swept plaza came the myopic aunt.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Well," she demanded, peering about her, "where is he?"

"He did not come," said Marthe.

The myopic aunt reached her chair with a sigh. "He did not come, *hein?* Well, neither did red."

VI

A SHORT half-hour later, about half past five, when the long, wavering shadows were merged into the neutral tint of dusk and the bronze sun had died behind Monaco, the impostor stepped cautiously along the terrace where Peter had taken leave of him last. He was dressed as before—no better; but now he carried over his shoulder a roll of blankets and a knapsack was strapped to his back. He was accoutred like a French soldier on the march.

He paused by the terrace railing to glance at the quiet harbor below. Already, behind him, the lights were lit in the Casino, and in the Café de Paris the orchestra was playing to the last loitering guests. It was the hour of transition; the lull between the gayety of the afternoon and that of the evening, when good, fever-fearing people seek four walls and a roof.

But the shabby impostor, evidently fearless, rested his lean arms on the balustrade and breathed long and deep of the soft, sweet air, borne to him on the breeze from the sea's scented islands. Far beneath him lights flashed out by the harborside and, vaguely, he could trace the silvery lines of a yacht riding smoothly to the ground swell.

"Monte Carlo," he said aloud, "you are a beautiful dream city; you are the devil's gilded wonderland. Here men with lustful hands have built a temple to the god called Gold, and here daily they come to worship. I, too, might have knelt in those aisles and bowed my head beneath the gilded dome. Sing, O muse, of Ferdinand Taillandy's sacrifice! And yet was it a sacrifice worthy the singing? They tried to tempt me with their gold. 'Twelve million francs,' they cried, and waited for me to dress myself appropriately to receive it. Twelve million francs! Bah! Twelve million burdens—twelve million fetters to bind me to their world. Ferdinand, you did well to escape them and you are richer than they; for have you not the sky and the sea and the hills and the sun upon them, and twelve million stars to light your way by night?"

He turned his back to the sea to face the mountains shining snow-crowned against the unquiet sky. On the path to La Turbie a few lights dimmed and glowed small as fireflies. The hush of evening hung about him like a heavy perfume, all-pervading, compelling.

Of a sudden, through the dusk, came a figure in white. It was the myopic aunt, feeling her way along the terrace path. She was wringing her hands and making great lamentation, for she had lost much gold. As she drew near, distress resolved itself into words, and, heedless of who might hear, she complained to the stars.

The shabby poet turned with a quiet smile on his lips. Placing his knapsack on the balustrade, he ran his lean fingers swiftly through his pockets and drew out a thousand-franc note. He presented it with a low bow.

"My poor, good woman," he said, "it is plain that you are in distress. You have lost everything. I give you this the more freely because I, on the contrary, have all of this wonderful world. May it buy for you the happiness of a moment, for by renouncing it I shall gain the happiness of the years."

He thrust the note into her hand. She stopped, groped for her lorgnon, desisted, and mechanically closed her fingers on the piece of paper. Before she could speak he left her.

He turned and, slinging his sack once more across his shoulders, stretched out his arms as though reaching for his freedom.

"I will be true to the gods," he said, and went up toward the hills where they were meeting the night.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE BIRD IN THE BUSH

By Katharine Fullerton Gerould

WHEN Rhoda Glave came down into the library, she found that her husband had gone out. It seemed odd, until she remembered that Haysthorpe, their guest, had an inordinate appetite for midnight air. Evidently he had persuaded Roland to join him, and they would be strolling, Heaven knew how far, in the dusk and chill of the deserted elm-shaded streets. Mrs. Glave gathered her pale draperies about her with a little disgusted gesture, as if to leave the room that had disappointed her. The smooth silk, worn to limpness, still at its latter end hung gracefully. Rhoda Glave always wore a dress forever, until it seemed to be a kind of uniform. Once in five years, when she appeared in something new, you felt as if the leopard had changed his spots. Then you got used to her in that—*e da capo*.

Roland Glave's library, in which his wife now stood, was in its quality not unlike his wife's dress. It looked much worn, used to the last shred; but in the composition of its elements a high standard had prevailed. Evidently the Glaves couldn't put up with bad things; they would go without, or they would wear their possessions to bits, but they wouldn't compromise beyond the bounds of decency. Nothing was patched, but everything was very, very thin. A similar record was written on Rhoda Glave's face for any one to read—all in noble phrases of resignation and mirth. She had had her day—like the frock, like the room—but she had lasted better. The play of her features was not over. Her chestnut hair sprang vividly up from her forehead; the hand that held her short silken train was firm and white. She held her head high—would always hold it high, one would have surmised. She had the look of a woman who has prepaid the importunate piper.

Rhoda Glave's gesture of disgust was only incipient. She let her soft, shabby draperies fall, and stood for an instant before a faded chair into which presently she sank. Her firm fingers rested on a book, but she did not take it up. Instead, she arranged herself slowly in a comfortable position, then clasped her hands behind her head and stared before her into the half-dead fire. Relaxed, but poised—a typical attitude—she began to think. . . .

Good old Haysthorpe! He had been a classmate of Roland's, and his half-melancholy, half-cynical presence, his slight limp, his comfortable, safe income that he had never tried to increase, though with his relations it would have been so easy, had been familiar facts of all her married life. He had loyally taken her over, as she had loyally taken him. He wasn't there very often—he was usually wandering about the earth—but whenever he was she found him welcome. Veils dropped away when he came. Oh, she *liked* Haysthorpe. He gave them both the requickened sense of their own brilliant beginning. Whatever else he was cynical about, he was never cynical about them. He took their romance delicately for granted; and admitted that, peerless though Roland might be among men, he had been well mated in his bride. Oh, for Haysthorpe, Rhoda reflected, they might have been a constellation! It was something to be fixed for one pair of eyes in the vivid firmament. Yes, Haysthorpe had been wonderful; and he might walk Roland as far as he liked—she would not complain; though this wife of fifteen years' standing, the mother of four children, still found no use for her fine eyes comparable with that of resting on her husband's face. She didn't grudge anything to Haysthorpe, but it wasn't to be expected that she should prefer having her rare late-evening moments bereft of their luminary. She wanted Roland in—she always wanted him in. A roof existed, to her mind, to shelter him, and a roof not thus occupied hadn't much dignity. By the way, the actual roof of the kitchen had leaked in yesterday's rain—they must

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

see the plumber. Rhoda smiled to herself at the imagery life imposed. Plumbers and constellations!

Why didn't they come back? This prolonged stroll—slow, of course, to humor Haysthorpe's limp—was like the old lavish days before the children came, when time, if it was money, was at least golden and not mere slippery change. Roland had been pot-boiling even then, but boiling the pot wasn't so bad if only you didn't have to boil it all the time—and stir, stir, stir, as it boiled, until your arm ached. Of course, Roland hadn't it in him to do anything without a *cachet* of its own; but the fact remained that he reviewed other men's books, passed judgment on other men's policies, worked at other men's behests for whatever they decided to give him. His reputation was, in its way, unique; but he had never had time to stamp his impression home on the world at large—the world that pays. He was a genius, poor darling, but a genius-of-all-work. The thing he did best was the thing for which he got no pay at all: he talked superlatively.

After college Roland Glave had flung all his tiny inheritance into a traveller's purse, and had gone round the world. He had gone with modern speed and comfort; yet he seemed to have swung out to the horizon in a glorious galleon, to have searched the seas to the sound of music, and to have brought home rich argosies of anecdote and fable. Rhoda remembered the vivid months after his return, when they had fallen in love with each other. His talk was in the grand manner, *voilà tout;* and if he was as poor as he was adored, what did it matter? There was no fatal fleck of egotism on his brilliance. He had done whatever dignified, ill-paying thing came to hand, done it faithfully, cheerfully, and a little whimsically. They hadn't been able to pluck the flowers of his talent, because they had always needed the fruit; but they had never been sordid, and they had never consented for a moment to believe that the glittering material chance mightn't come. If it hadn't been for the children—Rhoda caught her breath as the last log fell down to ashes—well, if it hadn't been for their children, they would have enough to renew the cup of adventure, to keep it always brimming and bubbling at their lips. They were well off for two. They weren't well off for six; and if anything connected with their marriage could have been sordid—it couldn't!—it would have been the fees for specialists and the absurdly monotonous way in which each child managed to combine its parents' poorest features. They had been too much in love not to want children; for each of them not privately and passionately to desire increase from that other fairest creature. No, there had never—Rhoda reiterated vehemently to herself—since the world began been but one way. Even poor, dull, little stammering Stanton—their only boy—was in the antique tradition. It was certainly very much in the antique tradition (Rhoda was apt to frame her sentiment in irony: apples of gold in pictures of silver) that your children should reproduce their ancestors rather than their parents. Poor little Stanton! How they had hovered over his cradle, and how resolutely, during the years, had each refused to put into words the wonder that daily grew! How could Stanton be Roland's boy? How could he be Rhoda's son? The doctors all shook their heads over him—felt his back, looked in his throat, did all the things that cost so much. And still Stanton peered and stammered, and reacted to life with a simplicity that had in it nothing idyllic. Just a dear, pathetically dull, and mysteriously ailing child. . . . And the little girls: they were well-mannered—of course! but they might have been anybody's children. No one, Rhoda thought as she sat waiting for the two men, would ever have taken them for Roland Glave's. Chin in hand, for a change, she reflected on the odd usury of romance. "It's worth everything," she said silently; "and that is probably why it charges you a hundred per cent."

And then she heard Haysthorpe's uneven step and her husband's voice. Nearly two; what *had* they been talking of? She rose to greet them. No time to-night to put the problem of Stanton. Roland would be tired, and she knew as well as he what a pile of books had to be got through with on the morrow. But Haysthorpe was not to be blamed ever; and the new problem about Stanton could wait. Strange, pitiful little Stanton!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Rhoda!" Glave's fine Roman features (small wonder that Haysthorpe mocked him with "Petronius Arbiter"!) grew gravely bright. "Did you stay up for us? I thought you would have been asleep long since."

"I finished Peggy's dress for the birthday party, and you know what a duffer I am at sewing. Then I came down for conversation, and waited up for sheer curiosity to see what Geoffrey had done with you." Even to Haysthorpe she couldn't, just then, mention Stanton as a problem.

"The most extraordinary things!" Glave exclaimed. "Haven't you, Haysthorpe?"

"Apparently." Haysthorpe stood by the fire; but neither its warmth nor exercise in the night air brought any tinge into his colorless face. His pallor was natural—the pallor almost of alabaster, beneath his smooth fair hair. He had, too, save for his intimates, a marble manner; so that, altogether, a world given to stupid epithets could not be much blamed for calling him cold. "Apparently, Rhoda. I've startled him, at all events, into tremendous form."

"Form! You startled me into sheer delirium. I must have been a spectacle! Rhoda, dear, why did you stay away all the evening?"

"I waited as long as I could, and when Rhoda didn't come—" Haysthorpe began apologetically.

"It was really my last minute for Peggy's dress," sighed Rhoda. She knew from Roland's look that he had genuinely missed her; that whatever Haysthorpe had imparted was something he hadn't wanted to taste alone. She didn't like missing Roland himself "in tremendous form." He was so good; no one could know so well as she how good he was. He would talk you into the midst of the Pleiades, whisk you up to the verge of Saturn. *She* knew. Fifteen years of marriage—marriage which is happiness in the form of the fugue!—had taught her patience but had whetted her appetite. Peggy's dress seemed like the finger of Fate. The children (bless them!) took so much time—wasted so much, if it came to that. Whatever they did, they seemed to do with a happy eye on eternity.

"I must go to bed now," said Rhoda; "but you might tell me in three words."

"Oh, three words!" protested Haysthorpe. "Look how long it's taken me. But . . . how would 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' do?"

"'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,'" she repeated. "Oh, if it's just another epigram you've been polishing on Roland——"

"Let it go at 'Liberty,'" sang out Glave. "Geoffrey has chartered a yacht for the Hesperides, and puts us in command with the kiddies for cargo. He's off to Cimmeria himself."

Haysthorpe left the fire, limped across to Rhoda, and took her hands in his.

"It's only that it's been my luck, my dear, to put him and adventure together in a phrase that told. The Great Person liked the phrase, and has always been in private moments a serious admirer of Roland's. Why not make one of the private moments public? I suggested it. He caught on like wildfire. I answered for our boy up to the hilt. . . . You see, I *do* sometimes dine out with my relatives. And now you two have really only to decide."

"What is it?" Her cleverness seemed all to have deserted her. She beat wildly in a bright fog of conjecture.

"A perfectly good, though naturally very small, diplomatic post. Minister to Something-or-other with a lovely climate, where you can afford twenty servants and pick your food, in courses, off the trees. Not a thing for Glave to do, really, but produce masterpieces, and now and then practise his impeccable Spanish on dignitaries. What price *that, madame l'ambassadrice?*" He smiled at her impassive face; then, as he bent to kiss her hand, whispered, "Look at him."

She did look at Glave, and caught her breath. Never but once before had she seen that light in his eyes—the eyes of a man who stands face to face with Fortune, breasting her smile. Fifteen years before she had caught her breath in the same way. All these years she had thought of it as a light that passes with youth. But . . . even Haysthorpe's colorless face reflected it now with a faint lunar glow.

She could not speak, yet every instant that she delayed, she knew, would make her reply, when it came, more inadequate.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At last she gave it up. "Dear Geoffrey," she murmured, laying her hand on his arm for an instant. Then she stood before her husband. Him she did not touch—for all Haysthorpe, their common tensity could melt only into a straining embrace. She flung her head back—deliberately; she was sure she smiled. "It *is* Hesperia!" she cried. "But I can't say things to-night. We'll talk all day to-morrow. And there, you dears, are your whiskey and your soda. You understand?"

They did understand, their faces assured her, and she fled. They didn't, poor darlings, but she would go quickly to her own room and light her bale-fires there, if need be.

In spite of Rhoda's gallant prophecy, all the next day couldn't, of course, go in talk. There were the children's lessons—next year they hoped to afford a school for Peggy and Julia at least, but this year Stanton had eaten up, month by month, the fluctuating balance; there was the birthday party, for which they had to be dressed and to which they had to be taken; there was the fatal plumber—two of him, as always, to upset the kitchen and demoralize the cook. On Roland's side, there were the books that couldn't wait, and that had to be looked at, at least, before they could be reviewed. Not until evening—and even then Roland was still in the library tackling the last of the hysterical group—could she sit down with Haysthorpe and beg for details.

"Roland and I haven't dared to begin," she explained. "Everything would have gone by the board if we had once started on—'Hesperia.' It's had to wait—but here we are."

"Couldn't he chuck the trash for one day? Especially now that——"

Rhoda smiled. "I'm afraid not even now. And my trash certainly couldn't be chucked. Besides—" She hesitated. They must seem ungrateful. Of course, Roland would have chucked anything for a day, if she had asked him to. If she could only explain to Haysthorpe that her delaying, so easily made to seem of necessity, was half cowardice, half sheer aching mercy for Roland and the vision in which, for a few hours, he was walking. She knew—she read it in his every gesture—that it wasn't so bad even to write reviews of inferior novels with a pen perhaps destined to trace his own masterpiece some day, in Hesperia. How much, she wondered, could she, in loyalty, say to Haysthorpe? It wasn't loyal, of course, to say anything to him that hadn't first been said, or implied, to Roland. The whole question was: how much had Roland inferred from her few hesitating phrases? Perhaps everything. If they could only find a way out! Perhaps she was morbid; too much given to scenting frustration in every new wind that blew. It was a little her habit to read life too personally; to believe superstitiously that because she had had so much, she couldn't, in mere mathematics, have any more. Fate didn't give you Roland *and* Hesperia, she reasoned. She did not stop to ask whether Fate couldn't perhaps give Roland both Hesperia and her. That would have been stupid juggling; modesty aside, she knew what she meant to Roland. Besides, it was always too easy to see him as doomed by his very beauty. Yet it wasn't a moment for superstition; it was a moment for all the humor one had.

"It's hard to take life at its word," she threw out, as she groped.

"Oh, if ever two people played fair with life, it's you. You needn't be afraid, Rhoda."

His face was all kindness. He didn't think them ungrateful. He trusted them. Dear Haysthorpe!

"You haven't had any time, really, have you?" he went on. "I kept Roland up until three, I confess. I have to go to-morrow, you know."

Rhoda wavered. "Only five minutes—while he was shaving. He couldn't say much!" She laughed. "And the children have been about. We can't talk about it before them. They would begin to pack their little trunks—and that *would* be a mess to clear up!" Still she wavered, but her resolve was beginning to harden. She went on, in another tone. She heard, herself, that her tone had changed. It reassured her.

"I said to him that we must think hard. The children, I mean. . . . Of course there couldn't be any question for Roland or me. It *is* liberty."

"I've always thought, you know," said Haysthorpe slowly, "that Roland had

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more than one string to his bow. He's got so much history and politics and sociology stowed away. Wendell realized that. He had read the 'Contemporary Essays.' It's a little place, but in these days even little places are important—anything may happen over night, with Japan and Germany going such a pace. If he made good—and that's only a question of opportunity—he would be in the direct line for some of the better places. I don't mean the biggest capitals—the retreats for superannuated millionaires—but the important minor posts."

"Oh, I know, I know!" Hadn't she spent the hours from two to seven that morning thinking of the magnificent chance it would be for her magnificent mate? She could have believed diplomacy invented in the dawn of time for the sake of being justified in the twentieth century by Roland Glave. There was no limit to Rhoda's deterministic power to read all history in the light of her special revelation.

"Of course you know, my dear. But I couldn't help saying it. And I think Roland himself feels that. Gad! If you could have heard him talk last night out in the open—he oughtn't to be sacrificed as he has been all these years. Wherever he is, he's really at the top; but he ought to be so visibly at the top that fools have to crane their necks. I don't know what *The Cosmic Review* will do without him, but I'd jolly well like to see. Didn't even have the sense to give him the editorship when old What's-his-name died!"

"You can't blame them. He *would* have run it into the ground, you know. Think of the articles he wouldn't have printed!" Rhoda fell into the old laughing tolerance for a moment. *The Cosmic* might have been an ant-hill and they good-natured strollers.

Haysthorpe smiled absently. He seemed to be thinking. "Do you really mean it seriously about the children? Is it their dreadful little education that's worrying you?"

"Geoffrey, how can you?" She spoke lightly, but her eyes were fixed, as if on a great incoming wave. "I sha'n't worry about their education so long as they have the privilege of living under their father's roof. And you don't need to be told that it's much better luck for dear little girls with no particular brains to be the daughters of a United States minister *anywhere*, than to go even to the schools we can't afford."

"Stanton, then?"

The great incoming wave had broken now in spray all about her. She had to struggle to keep her footing. To run was impossible. Quickly she decided. It would have to be said to-morrow, if not to-night; and perhaps Geoffrey could make it easier for Roland if he knew. Yet she blamed herself bitterly both for her cowardice and her mercy, that had somehow caused her to let Haysthorpe have the fact in its crudity before she had done more than hint it to Roland. She would go to Roland at once, of course; and then he and Haysthorpe could have it out. The morrow, she knew, would bring her the old routine; since, though with such good excuse, she had funked it all day, there was no hope now of the proper sequence. But the violated etiquette—never before violated by her—of the supreme human relation seemed to her monstrous. The notion of telling even Geoffrey first!

"Listen, Geoffrey. Roland, you know, had been away for a week before he joined you in town and brought you down. Otherwise I shouldn't be doing this ugly thing. It is ugly—perhaps I had better go to him now." She rose unsteadily.

Haysthorpe's hand pushed her gently back into her chair. "You're incapable of doing anything ugly, Rhoda. Something's troubling you that you haven't yet let Roland in on. That's it, isn't it?"

She nodded.

"Something you'd have to tell me, anyway?"

"Oh, yes, at once."

"It's all right, my dear girl. Tell me now, while Roland's finishing, and then go straight to him. It's I, with my proposition, that have somehow made the thing so hard to tell him—I can see that. Or you'd have dragged him off yesterday, the minute we got in."

She nodded again. "Oh, yesterday, I thought it could wait." She added bitterly: "I thought it had better wait until you had gone. And now it comes to my telling you first!"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Haysthorpe leaned forward, moving into the light. His tense face gleamed at her.

"Listen, Rhoda. You shall do whatever you think is right—of course. But remember this: neither one of us gives a fig for the other compared with Roland. I'd chuck you as you'd chuck me, any day, for him. Well, then, we can't be doing anything very dreadful. And I rather think, you know, since you have to tell me anyhow, you'd better tell me now. There's so little time. Between us, we might go over the ground and think of some way out—something to make it easier for him. He'll need it, Rhoda—he'll need it. And you need to tell. I can see that, you poor dear." No trace of the marble manner now.

"It may seem to you sordid—unreasonable," she began. "You've no children."

He showed her a white grimace. "No, thank God!"

"It's nothing to thank God for, Geoffrey." The wave had ebbed now, and she stood firm upon the sands. "Quite the contrary," she pursued resolutely. "Only I know what poor darling little Stanton must seem to you, set beside Roland." ("And to me" were the words that followed in her voiceless heart.) "But Stanton is there; and while Roland was off shooting last week, Dr. Tuck sent for me. He doesn't know; he can't promise or prophesy; but the chances are that Stanton will have to have a bad operation—perhaps two or three, in the next years. It's all very complicated and obscure—Roland will have to see Dr. Tuck, and make out more than I could—but everything depends on his being set straight. He'll have to be watched, and at the first sign of certain symptoms he'll have to be rushed off to Moorfeldt. He's at a critical age apparently. 'There's nothing to do but wait,' Dr. Tuck said; 'you're very fortunate to be near New York, where Moorfeldt could have him at once.' And for a long time—even if everything comes right—he will be very, very delicate. And you see"—all her misery was in her cry—"Stanton must have his chance."

Haysthorpe had risen while she was speaking, and as she finished he stood with his back to her, looking out through the dark window.

"What about Roland's chance?" he said thickly.

"You ask *me* that?"

"I was asking Omniscience, Rhoda, not you."

For a moment there was silence, silence quite unbroken by any reply from Omniscience. At last Haysthorpe turned back to her. "Have you told Roland anything?"

"Only that, in this connection, I was worried about Stanton. Dr. Tuck sent for me quite unexpectedly. Roland could hardly guess—except that, of course, we've always had to worry about Stanton. And now," she said after a little pause, "I think I must go to Roland. Poor darling!"

"Wait!" Haysthorpe's hand shot up. "Before you go I want you to think. You needn't, just because you're a mother, mind my asking you to think. You're the best woman I've ever known—if that is any comfort to you for what I'm going to say. *Are you sure you are right?* I love Stanton, too—always have loved the little beggar since I stood beside him at the christening font. I'd love any son of you two. But if it's between him and Roland, Roland's worth twice Stanton—worth a hundred times Stanton, either to me or in the open market. And this strikes me as being Roland's last big chance. I don't suggest your doing anything brutal or bad. But couldn't you leave Stanton here? Isn't there any one who would love the boy and see him through? God knows I'd do it myself if I were up to it."

"No one is up to that, Geoffrey, except his father and his mother. Stanton's not old enough to understand the situation, but he's old enough to have his heart broken. And they can break ours from the day they're born!" She bit back the emotion that surged up and phrased itself. "There isn't any one, Geoffrey, and he isn't strong enough for school. Just as a practical proposition it's impossible. There's no question but that Roland will see it in the same way."

"Is Tuck sure of saving the boy?"

She shook her head. "No—he's not sure of anything except that it will take all that any of us can do to give him just a fighting chance."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Would you let Roland go on ahead for a time without you?"

She looked at him gravely. "I shall propose that to him, of course. But I doubt if we could afford it."

His sternness melted. "Rhoda," he cried, "please understand! I'm a beast to put you on the rack like this, but I just can't help fighting to get out of the net. Here is one of the best minds of our time—we both know that—and since it has come to maturity it has never had freedom. It isn't for myself I want Roland a great man; it's for the world. Let clods mate and go under for the sake of their offspring. I defy anybody's offspring—even his own!—to be so important as Roland Glave. You think I wish ill to poor little Stanton—I don't. But I don't wish to see Roland despoiled for Stanton's problematical sake. I don't see what the world gets out of that. The bird in the hand is worth all four in the bush, if it comes to that. And you know as well as I do that this is practically a question of Roland's future. It's because the day's so late, and it's all so damnably important, that I'm behaving like this. To have Roland go under because he mayn't live anywhere but on some specialist's front stoop! . . . I love you both, and this thing is making me sick enough to die. What it's doing to you I don't even dare to think, my poor dear Rhoda!"

Rhoda Glave had covered her face with her hand. "I have said all that over to myself so many times in the last years, Geoffrey, that I can't even feel the impulse to tell you not to apologize, to tell you that I understand. Could a woman be Roland's wife and not feel as you do about it? You are bitter against me——"

He shook his head. "I am not."

She went on, still holding her hand over her eyes. "You are bitter against me, Geoffrey, because you believe that every mother is just a lioness crouching beside her cubs. You think I'm following some brainless instinct. It's a thing you've never faced for yourself, and so you fall back on all the old fables. I couldn't explain to you, if I would, how mistaken you are about me—and I wouldn't if I could. I don't understand any better than you what Nature is up to—with her birds in the bush. I know that Stanton isn't equal to Roland—not even with Peggy and Julia and Marian thrown in. It seems to me that I must know it better even than you do. But it somehow doesn't change anything."

She let her hand fall, and rose. "I am going to Roland now. I shall tell him as briefly as possible what Dr. Tuck told me, and that I've had to let you know. Then I shall send him straight to you." She looked Haysthorpe between the eyes. "I give you my word, and I sha'n't be induced to break it. You can count on me. If there is any way under heaven in which you can work on Roland to make him go, I shall think you the better man for trying it."

She moved to the door. As she passed his chair, she bent over and touched his forehead with her fingers. "We don't understand any better than you do, Geoffrey," she murmured. "The only difference between us is that we accept it and you don't."

"You absolutely speak for him?" He detained her one more instant.

"I won't touch him, Geoffrey. I give him to you. You have my word. But I know." She closed the door softly behind her.

It was a relief—could not be otherwise—when Geoffrey, his white face looking strangely gray and ghastly as he came out into the sunless afternoon, limped down the walk to his cab. All three showed the strain of the sleepless night and the dreary morning with the pitiless convention of its routine, in which the skilful silences and the tactful chatter, before children and servants, had been interruptions that did not help. Rhoda Glave had kept her word to Haysthorpe. Roland had come to him ten minutes after she left. Upstairs in her own room Rhoda, watch in hand, gave them an interminable hour. She dreaded going down to them as, she believed, she had never dreaded anything before; yet no hour had ever seemed so long. It was like bringing the weight of Stanton into the world again, she thought; only this time with knowledge instead of hope. Before she went down she looked in the mirror, smoothed her hair, cooled her temples with eau-de-cologne, powdered the deep blue circles under her eyes, lifted her head high, smiled courage at her

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

own blurred reflection—performed all the pathetic vain ritual of feminine preparation. A moment later, without knocking, she entered the room.

Immediately Glave's arm was about her and Glave's smile was full upon her face; though he finished his sentence to Haysthorpe before he spoke to her. Even then it was only "Sit down, dear—here," and he went on talking as if she had been there from the beginning. She rejoiced in the warmth of his perfect inclusion of her in himself, as if it had been fear of separation that numbed her. She had been sure, as she told Geoffrey; but there was unspeakable comfort in feeling sure there by his side, in watching him feel as she felt, react as she reacted—in only having to listen, as it were, to hear herself speak with Roland's golden tongue. That had been the supreme symbol to her always of their marriage—her joy of listening to him as to her own inmost convictions phrased by a god. And now, though the matter was so sad—though the god was phrasing their doom—her mated self was once more at peace. She did not need Haysthorpe's haggard "He sees it as you do, Rhoda," to find all her pity spending itself on poor Geoffrey, who with rage unspeakable had seen his miracle fail before his eyes. He was like—her weary but irrepressible fancy told her—a Jacobite noble pleading with Pretenders.

The talk had gone on for hours; and always Dr. Tuck recurred like some devil out of the machine. They couldn't get away from the fact; they couldn't get away from the situation. By midnight they seemed to Rhoda's tired brain petrified into a symbolic group: Geoffrey hoarse with the amount of bitter common-sense he had talked, she and Roland fixed for all time in some mythological attitude of parenthood—something for archæologists to interpret. It wasn't that they didn't long to be delivered from their Laokoönesque posture; they dealt in figures, in probabilities, in symptoms, in metaphors, in every known language, while Stanton—little, frustrating Stanton, the frail fruit of their flesh, the goal of their desire—slept ignorantly above. Each practical suggestion of Haysthorpe's—sometimes fantastic in its conception of concrete possibilities—brought to Rhoda an unreal hope that died as soon as she turned the eye of reason on it. Once—with a quick first look, as of an accomplice, at Haysthorpe—she asked quietly: "Could you perhaps go without me, Roland, leaving me to follow when I could?"

She had proved herself a woman of her word; which was her sole compensation for the accent of his "Rhoda! Never!"

As for Glave, he had perhaps never heard so many superlatives lavished upon himself as in that hour. Haysthorpe let him have it straight—all the praise that he had garnered during the years from others, and kept in his loyal inarticulate heart, poured forth in a golden stream. Glave flushed beneath it, and caught helplessly at Rhoda's hand. Yet he might have felt some justice in it, some belated compensation for incommensurate rewards; for he only said, "Even so, Geoffrey, the situation isn't changed. If you give 'hostages to Fortune'—well, you've your duty to your hostages. Ask any army man." And once, when Geoffrey was treating the black future in the epic manner, he turned to Rhoda almost with amusement. "My dear, does he think we don't know *that?*"

So it had gone, through hours, until Geoffrey, broken and beaten, took his candle and went to his room. Rhoda, as he stood in the door, put her hands on his shoulders. "Geoffrey, Geoffrey," she whispered, "Roland's above everything; but do you think this is easy for me?"

"I think it will kill you, in the end," he answered. "You don't, either of you, seem to see what I'm pleading for—the survival of the fittest. You treat me like a blasphemer."

For the first and last time in her life Rhoda Glave bent and kissed Geoffrey Haysthorpe's cheek. "No, Geoffrey dear, no," she said. "We love you more than we ever loved you before."

If it was a relief when Geoffrey went, it was still more of a relief when night closed in, when the young voices were still, and Roland Glave and his wife were left alone. They had much to go over; much separate talk on the part of each with Haysthorpe to be recounted; much sad and quiet discussion of the meagre, authoritative words of Dr. Tuck; much quick planning of the terrifyingly expensive future;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

much tender, atoning mention of Stanton himself. The little girls were forgotten—Hesperia would have done well enough for them! Both knew that bitter reactions would come; Glave braced himself, in the intervals, to the sub-editorship that his sensitive independence had long refused; Rhoda saw, in the silent instants, white hospital cots and the cheerful masks of nurses. . . . Both clung to the slight exaltation left them, made conscious afresh of the numbered years. At the end Rhoda drew near to her husband.

"I was glad, in a way, to have Geoffrey say it to me," she said. "I've so often felt it without daring to say it. Nature is a terrible futurist—and I'm not. Nothing is worth your chance to me. It seems like madness to give it up. My brain can't justify us. Once it seemed the most beautiful thing in the world for you to be repeated in human form. Now I know you can't be. In a thousand years nothing will happen so good as you. We're not even gambling. But it's the way we chose. . . ."

"It's the way we chose," he repeated firmly.

"The world won't thank us," she went on. "What will, I wonder?" Not the deaf generations, she thought to herself, to which we all sacrifice.

"Not Geoffrey," she heard Glave saying. "He will never understand. But he will always love us just the same. He'll have to. We haven't answered him. Life has answered him. Call it God, if you must. . . . I'm awfully tired."

"Tired, my darling?" Her drooping head rose with the old quick gesture.

"Not really tired, my own. No, never *really* tired!"

They clasped each other, so utterly at one that even Hesperia seemed a mere trick of the sunlight upon the sea.

LOVE OF LIFE

By Tertius van Dyke

Love you not the tall trees spreading wide their branches,
Cooling with their green shade the sunny days of June?
Love you not the little bird lost among the leaflets,
Dreamily repeating a quaint, brief tune?

Is there not a joy in the waste windy places;
Is there not a song by the long dusty way?
Is there not a glory in the sudden hour of struggle;
Is there not a peace in the long quiet day?

Love you not the meadows with the deep lush grasses;
Love you not the cloud-flocks noiseless in their flight?
Love you not the cool wind that stirs to meet the sunrise;
Love you not the stillness of the warm summer night?

Have you never wept with a grief that slowly passes,
Have you never laughed when a joy goes running by?
Know you not the peace of rest that follows labor?—
You have not learnt to live, then; how can you dare to die!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY

BY EDITH WHARTON

BOOK III

XXX

A FEW days after her decisive conversation with Raymond de Chelles, Undine, emerging from the doors of the Nouveau Luxe, where she had been to call on the newly-arrived Mrs. Homer Branney, once more found herself face to face with Elmer Moffatt.

This time there was no mistaking his eagerness to be recognized. He stopped short as they met, and she read in his eyes so frank an appreciation of her charms that she too stopped, holding out her hand.

"I'm glad you're going to speak to me," she said, and Moffatt reddened at the allusion.

"Well, I very nearly didn't. What have you done to yourself? I didn't know you. You look about as old as you did when I first landed at Apex—remember?"

He turned back and began to walk at her side in the direction of the Champs Elysées.

"Say—this is all right!" he exclaimed; and she saw that his glance had left her and was ranging across the wide silvery square ahead of them to the congregated domes and spires beyond the river.

"Do you like Paris?" she asked, vaguely wondering what theatres he had been to.

"It beats everything." He seemed to breathe in deeply the impression of fountains, sculpture, leafy avenues and long-drawn architectural distances fading into the afternoon haze.

"I suppose you've been to that old church over there?" he went on, his gold-topped stick pointing toward the towers of Notre Dame.

"Oh, of course; when I used to sightsee. Have you never been to Paris before?"

"No, this is my first look-round. I came across in March."

"In March?" she echoed inattentively. It never occurred to her that other people's lives went on when they were out of her range of vision, and she tried in vain to remember what she had last heard of Moffatt. "Wasn't that a bad time to leave Wall Street?"

"Well, so-so. Fact is, I was played out: needed a change." Nothing in his robust mien confirmed the statement, and he did not seem inclined to develop it. "I presume you're settled here now?" he went on. "I saw by the papers——"

"Yes," she interrupted; adding, after a moment: "It was all a mistake from the first."

"Well, I never thought he was your form," said Moffatt.

His eyes had come back to her, and the look in them struck her as something she might use to her advantage; but the next moment he had glanced away with a furrowed brow, and she had the sense that she had not wholly fixed his attention.

"I live at the other end of Paris. Why not come back and have tea with me?" she suggested, half moved by a desire to know more of his affairs, and half by the thought that a talk with him might help to shed some light on hers.

In the open taxi-cab which they presently picked up he seemed to recover his sense of well-being, and leaned back, his hands on the knob of his stick, with the air of a man pleasantly aware of his privileges. "This Paris is a thundering good place," he repeated once or twice, as they rolled on through the crush and glitter of the afternoon; and when they had descended at Undine's door, and he stood in her drawing-room, and looked out on the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

horse-chestnut trees rounding their green domes under the balcony, his satisfaction culminated in the comment: "I guess this lays out West End Avenue!"

His eyes met Undine's with their old twinkle, and their expression encouraged her to murmur: "Of course there are times when I'm very lonely."

She seated herself behind the tea-table, pulling off her long gloves, and he stood at a little distance, looking down on her with a queer comic twitch of his elastic mouth. "Well, I guess it's only when you want to be," he said, grasping a lyre-backed chair by its gilt cords, and sitting down astride of it, his light grey trousers stretching somewhat too tightly over his plump thighs. Undine was perfectly aware that he was a vulgar over-dressed man, with a red crease of fat above his collar and an impudent swaggering eye; yet she liked to see him there, and was conscious that he stirred the fibres of a self she had forgotten but had not ceased to understand.

She had fancied her avowal of loneliness might call forth some sentimental phrase; but though Moffatt was so clearly pleased to be with her she still saw that she was not the centre of his thoughts, and the discovery irritated her.

"I don't suppose *you've* known what it is to be lonely since you've been in Europe?" she continued as she held out his tea-cup.

"Oh," he said jocosely, "I don't always go round with a guide"; and she rejoined on the same note: "Then perhaps I shall see something of you."

"Why, there's nothing would suit me better; but the fact is, I'm probably sailing next week."

"Oh, are you? I'm sorry." There was nothing feigned in her regret.

"Anything I can do for you across the pond?"

She hesitated. "There's something you can do for me right off."

He looked at her more attentively, as if his practised eye had passed through the surface of her beauty to what might be going on behind it. "Do you want my blessing again?" he asked with sudden irony.

Undine opened her eyes with a trustful look. "Yes—I do."

"Well—I'll be damned!" said Moffatt gaily.

"You've always been so awfully nice," she began; and he leaned back, grasping both sides of the chair-back, and shaking it a little with his laugh.

He kept in the same attitude while she proceeded to unfold her case, listening to her with the air of sober concentration that his frivolous face took on at any serious demand on his attention. When she had ended he kept the same look during an interval of silent pondering. "Is it the fellow who was over at Nice with you that day?" he then asked.

She looked at him with surprise. "How did you know?"

"Why, I liked his looks," said Moffatt simply.

He got up and strolled toward the window. On the way he stopped before a table covered with showy trifles, and after looking at them for a moment singled out a dim old brown and golden book which de Chelles had given her. He examined it lingeringly, as though it touched the spring of some choked-up sensibility for which he had no language. "Say—" he began: it was the usual prelude to his enthusiasms; but he laid the book down and turned back to Undine.

"Then you think if you had the cash you could fix it up all right with the Pope?"

Her heart began to beat. She remembered that he had once put a job in Ralph's way, and had let her understand that he had done it partly for her sake.

"Well," he continued, relapsing into hyperbole, "I wish I could send the old gentleman my cheque tomorrow morning: but the fact is I'm high and dry." He looked at her with a sudden odd intensity. "If I *wasn't*, I dunno but what—" The phrase was lost in his familiar whistle. "That's an awfully fetching way you do your hair," he said.

It was a disappointment to Undine to hear that his affairs were not prospering, for she knew that in his world "pull" and solvency were closely related, and that such support as she had hoped he might give her would be contingent on his own situation. But she had again a fleeting sense of his mysterious power of accomplishing things in the teeth of adversity;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and she answered: "What I want is your advice."

He turned away from her and wandered across the room, his hands in his pockets. On her ornate writing desk he saw a photograph of Paul, bright-curled and sturdy-legged, in a manly reefer, and bent over it with a murmur of approval. "Say—what a fellow! Got him with you?"

Undine coloured. "No—" she began; and seeing his look of surprise, she embarked on her usual explanation. "I can't tell you how I miss him," she ended, with a ring of truth that carried conviction to her own ears if not to Moffatt's.

"Why don't you get him back, then?"

"Why, I——"

Moffatt had picked up the frame and was looking at the photograph more closely. "Pants!" he chuckled. "I declare!"

He turned back to Undine. "Who *does* he belong to, anyhow?"

"Belong to?" She repeated the words as though she hardly followed them.

"Who got him when you were divorced? Did you?"

"Oh, I got everything," she said, her instinct of self-defense on the alert.

"So I thought." He stood before her, stoutly planted on his short legs, and speaking with an aggressive energy. "Well, I know what I'd do if he was mine."

"If he was yours?"

"And you tried to get him away from me. Fight you to a finish! If it cost me down to my last dollar I would."

The conversation seemed to be wandering from the point, and she answered, with a touch of impatience: "It wouldn't cost you anything like that. I haven't got a dollar to fight back with."

"Well, you ain't got to fight. Your decree gave him to you, didn't it? Why don't you send right over and get him? That's what I'd do if I was you."

Undine looked up quickly. "But I'm awfully poor; I can't afford to have him here."

"You couldn't, up to now; but now you're going to get married. You're going to be able to give him a home and a father's care—and the foreign languages. That's what I'd say if I was you. . . His father takes considerable stock in him, don't he?"

She coloured, a denial on her lips; but she could not shape it. "We're both awfully fond of him of course. . . His father'd never give him up!"

"Just so." Moffatt's face had grown as sharp as glass. "You've got the Marvells running. All you've got to do's to sit tight and wait for their cheque." He dropped back to his equestrian seat on the lyre-backed chair.

Undine stood up and moved uneasily toward the window. She seemed to see her little boy as though he were in the room with her; she did not understand how she could have lived so long without him. . . She stood for a long time without speaking, feeling behind her the concentrated irony of Moffatt's silent gaze.

"You couldn't lend me the money—manage to borrow it for me, I mean?" she finally turned back to ask.

He laughed. "If I could manage to borrow any money at this particular minute—well, I'd have to lend every dollar of it to Elmer Moffatt, Esquire. I'm stone-broke, if you want to know. And wanted for an Investigation too. That's why I've been over here improving my mind."

"Why, I thought you were going home next week?"

He grinned. "I am, because I've found out there's a party wants me to stay away worse than the courts want me back. Making the trip just for my private satisfaction—there won't be any money in it, I'm afraid."

Leaden disappointment descended on Undine. She had felt almost sure of Moffatt's helping her, and for an instant she wondered if some long-smouldering jealousy had flamed up under its cold cinders. But another look at his face denied her this slight solace; and his evident indifference was the last blow to her pride. The twinge it gave her prompted her to ask: "Don't you ever mean to get married?"

Moffatt gave her a quick look. "Why, I shouldn't wonder—one of these days. Millionaires always collect something; but I've got to collect my millions first."

He spoke coolly and half-humorously, and before he had ended she had lost all

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

interest in his reply. He seemed to be aware of the fact, for he stood up and held out his hand.

"Well, so long, Mrs. Marvell. It's been uncommonly pleasant to see you; and you'd better think over what I've said."

She let her hand fall in his sadly. "You've never had a child," she answered.

BOOK IV

XXXI

NEARLY two years had passed since Ralph Marvell, waking from his long sleep in the hot summer light of Washington Square, had found that the face of life was changed for him.

In the interval he had gradually adapted himself to the new order of things; but the months of adaptation had been a time of such darkness and confusion that, from the vantage-ground of his recovered lucidity, he could not yet distinguish the stages by which he had worked his way out; and even now his footing was not secure.

His first effort had been to readjust his values—to take an inventory of them, and reclassify them, so that one at least might be made to appear as important as those he had lost: otherwise there could be no imaginable reason why he should go on living. He applied himself doggedly to this attempt; but whenever he thought he had found a reason that his mind could rest in, it gave way under him, and the old struggle for a foothold began again. His two reasons for living were his boy and his book. The boy was incomparably the stronger argument, yet the less serviceable in filling the void. Ralph felt his son all the while, and all through his other feelings; but he could not think about him actively and continuously, could not forever exercise his eager empty dissatisfied mind on the relatively simple problem of clothing, educating and amusing a little boy of six. Yet Paul's existence was the all-sufficient reason for his own; and he turned again, with a kind of cold fervour, to his abandoned literary dream. Material needs obliged him to go on with his regular business; but, the day's work over, he was now possessed of a leisure as bare and as blank as an unfurnished house, yet that was at least his own to furnish as he pleased.

Meanwhile he was beginning to show a presentable face to the world, and to be once more treated like a man in whose case no one is particularly interested. His men friends ceased to say: "Hallo, old chap, I never saw you looking fitter!" and elderly ladies no longer told him they were sure he kept too much to himself, and urged him to drop in any afternoon for a quiet talk. People left him to his sorrow as a man is left to an incurable habit, an unfortunate tie: they ignored it, and looked over its head if they happened to catch a glimpse of it at his elbow.

These glimpses were given to them more and more rarely. The smothered springs of life were bubbling up in Ralph, and there were days when he was glad to wake and see the sun in his window, and when he began to plan his book, and to fancy that the planning really interested him. He could even keep up the delusion for several days—for intervals each time appreciably longer—before it shrivelled up again in a scorching blast of disenchantment. The worst of it was that he could never tell when these hot gusts of anguish would overtake him. They came sometimes just when he felt most secure, when he was saying to himself: "After all, things are really worth while—" sometimes even when he was sitting with Clare Van Degen, listening to her voice, watching her hands, and indolently turning over in his mind the opening chapters of his book.

"You ought to write"; they had one and all said it to him from the first; and he was half-disposed to think he might have begun sooner if he had not been urged on by their watchful fondness. Everybody wanted him to write—everybody had decided that he ought to, that he would, that he must be persuaded to; and the incessant imperceptible pressure of encouragement—the assumption of those about him that because it would be good for him to write he must naturally be able to—acted on his restive nerves as a stronger deterrent than disapproval.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Even Clare had fallen into the same mistake; and one day, as he sat talking with her on the verandah of Laura Fairford's little house on the Sound—where they now most frequently met—Ralph had half-impatiently rejoined: "Oh, if you think it's literature I need——!"

Instantly he had seen her face change, and the speaking hands tremble a little on her knee. But she achieved the feat of not answering him, or turning her steady eyes from the strip of dancing mid-summer water at the foot of Laura's lawn. Ralph leaned a little nearer, and for an instant his hand imagined the flutter of hers. But instead of clasping it he drew back, and rising from his chair wandered away to the other end of the verandah. . . No, decidedly, he didn't feel as Clare felt. If he loved her—as he sometimes thought he did—it was not in the same way. He had a great tenderness for her, he was more nearly happy with her than with any one else; he liked to sit and talk with her, and watch her face and her hands, and he wished there were some way—some different way—of letting her know it; but he could not conceive that tenderness and desire could ever again be one for him: such a notion as that seemed a part of the monstrous sentimental muddle on which his life had gone aground.

"I shall write—of course I shall write some day," he said, turning back to his seat. "I've had a novel in the back of my head for years; and now's the time to pull it out."

He hardly knew what he was saying; but before the end of the sentence he knew that Clare had understood what he meant to convey, and he felt henceforth committed to letting her talk to him as much as she pleased about his book. He himself, in consequence, took to thinking about it more consecutively; and just as his friends began to forget they had ever urged him to write, he sat down in earnest to begin.

The vision that had come to him had no likeness to any of his earlier imaginings. Two or three subjects had haunted him, pleading for expression, during the first years of his marriage; but these now seemed either too lyrical or too tragic. He no longer saw life on the heroic scale: he wanted to do something in which men should look no bigger than the insects they were. He contrived in the course of time to reduce one of his old subjects to these dimensions, and he after nights of brooding made a dash at it, and wrote an opening chapter that struck him as not too bad. In the exhilaration of this first attempt he spent some pleasant evenings revising and polishing his work; and gradually a feeling of authority and importance developed in him. In the morning, when he woke, instead of his habitual sense of lassitude, he felt an eagerness to be up and doing, and a conviction that his individual task was a necessary part of the world's machinery. He kept his secret with the beginner's deadly fear of losing his hold on his half-real creations if he let in any outer light on them; but he went about with a more assured step, shrank less from meeting and talking with his friends, and even began to dine out again, and to laugh at some of the jokes he heard.

Laura Fairford, to get Paul away from town, had gone early to the country; and Ralph, who went down to her every Saturday, usually found Clare Van Degen there. Since his divorce he had never entered his cousin's pinnacled palace; and Clare had never asked him why he stayed away. This mutual silence had been their sole allusion to Van Degen's share in the catastrophe, though Ralph had spoken frankly of its other aspects. They talked, however, most often of impersonal subjects—books, pictures, plays, or whatever the world that interested them was doing—and she showed no desire to draw him back to his own affairs. She was again staying late in town—to have a pretext, as he guessed, for coming down on Sundays to the Fairfords'—and they often made the trip together in her motor; but he had not yet spoken to her of having begun his book. One May evening, however, as they sat alone in the verandah, he suddenly told her that he was writing. As he spoke his heart beat like a boy's; but once the words were out they gave him a feeling of self-confidence, and he began to sketch his plan, and then to go into its details. Clare listened intently, devoutly, her eyes burning on him through the dusk like the stars deepening above the garden trees; and when she got up to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

go in he followed her with a new sense of reassurance.

The dinner that evening was unusually pleasant. Charles Bowen, just back from his usual spring travels, had come straight down to his friends from the steamer; and the fund of impressions he brought with him gave Ralph a desire to be up and wandering. And why not—when the book was done? He smiled across the table at Clare.

"Next summer you'll have to charter a yacht, and take us all off to the Ægean. We can't have Bowen condescending to us about the out-of-the-way places he's been seeing."

Was it really he who was speaking, and his cousin who was sending him back her dusky smile? Well—why not, again? The seasons renewed themselves, and he too was putting out a new growth. "My book—my book—my book," kept repeating itself under all his thoughts, as Undine's name had once perpetually murmured there. That night as he went up to bed he said to himself that he was actually ceasing to think about his wife. . .

On the way up, Laura called him to her room, and putting her arm about him gave him a kiss.

"You look so well, dear!"

"But why shouldn't I?" he answered gaily, as if ridiculing her absurd fancy that he had ever looked otherwise. Paul was sleeping behind the next door, and the sense of the boy's nearness gave him a warmer glow. His little world was rounding itself out again, and once more he felt himself safe and at peace in its circle.

His sister looked as if she had something more to say; but she merely bade him a fond good night, and he went up whistling to his room.

The next morning he was to take a walk with Clare, and while he lounged about the drawing-room, waiting for her to come down, a servant entered with the Sunday papers. Ralph picked one up, and was absently unfolding it when his eye fell on his own name: a sight he had been spared since the last echoes of his divorce had subsided. His impulse was to fling the paper down, to hurl it as far from him as he could; but a grim fascination tightened his hold and drew his eyes back to the hated head-line. "New York Beauty Weds French Nobleman. Mrs. Undine Marvell Confident Pope Will Annul Previous Marriage. Mrs. Marvell Talks About Her Case."

There it was before him in all its long-drawn horror—an "interview"—an "interview" of Undine's about her coming marriage! Ah, she talked about her case indeed! Her confidences filled the greater part of a column, and the only detail she seemed to have omitted was the name of her future husband, who was referred to by herself as "my fiancé" and by the interviewer as "the Count," or "a prominent scion of the French nobility."

Ralph was still reading when he heard Laura's step behind him. He threw the paper aside and their eyes met.

"Is this what you wanted to tell me last night?"

"Last night?—Is it in the papers?"

"Who told you? Bowen, I suppose? What else has he heard?"

"Oh, Ralph, what does it matter—what can it possibly matter?"

"Who's the man? Did he tell you that?" Ralph insisted. He saw her growing agitation. "Why can't you answer? Is it any one I know?"

"He was told in Paris it was his friend Chelles."

"Chelles?" Ralph laughed, and his laugh sounded in his own ears like an echo of the dreary mirth with which he had filled Mr. Spragg's office the day he had learned that Undine intended to divorce him. But now his wrath was seasoned with a wholesome irony. The fact of his wife's having reached another stage in her ascent fell into its place as a part of the huge human buffoonery.

"Besides," Laura went on, "it's all perfect nonsense, of course. How in the world can she have her marriage annulled?"

Ralph pondered: this put the matter in another light. "With a great deal of money I suppose she might."

"Well, she certainly won't get that from Chelles. He's far from rich, Charles tells me." Laura waited, watching him, before she risked: "That's what convinces me she wouldn't have him if she could."

"His not being rich?" Ralph shrugged. "There may be other inducements. But

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

she won't be able to manage it." He heard himself speaking quite collectedly. Had Undine at last lost her power of wounding him?

Clare came in, dressed for their walk, and under Laura's anxious eyes he picked up the newspaper again and held it out with a careless: "Look at this!"

His cousin's glance flew down the column, and he saw the tremor of her lashes as she read. Then she lifted her head. "But you'll be free!" Her face was as vivid as a flower.

"Free? I'm free now, as far as that goes!"

"Oh, but it will go so much farther when she has another name—when she's a different person altogether! Then you'll really have Paul to yourself."

"Paul?" Laura intervened with a nervous laugh. "But there's never been the least doubt about his having Paul!"

They heard the boy's laughter on the lawn, and she went out to join him. Ralph was still looking at his cousin.

"You're glad, then?" came from him involuntarily; and she startled him by bursting into tears. He bent over and kissed her on the cheek.

XXXII

Ralph, as the days passed, felt that Clare was right: if Undine married again he would possess himself more completely, be more definitely rid of his past. And he did not doubt that she would gain her end: he knew her violent desires and her cold tenacity. If she had failed to capture Van Degen it was probably because she lacked experience of that particular type of man, of his huge immediate wants and feeble vacillating purposes; most of all, because she had not yet measured the strength of the social considerations that restrained him. It was a mistake she was not likely to repeat, and her failure had probably a useful preliminary to success. It was a long time since Ralph had deliberately allowed himself to think of her, and as he did so the overwhelming fact of her beauty became present to him again, no longer as an element of his being but as a power dispassionately estimated. He said to himself: "Any man who can feel at all will feel it as I did"; and the conviction grew in him that Raymond de Chelles, of whom he had formed an idea through Bowen's talk, was not the man to give her up, even if she failed to obtain the release his religion exacted.

Meanwhile Ralph was aware of a gradually increasing sense of freedom and security—gradually beginning to feel himself freer and lighter. Undine's act, by cutting the last link between them, seemed to have given him back to himself; and the mere fact that he could consider his case in all its bearings, impartially and ironically, showed him the distance he had travelled, the extent to which he had renewed himself. He had been moved, too, by Clare's cry of joy at his release. Though the nature of his feeling for her had not changed he was aware of a new quality in their friendship. When he went back to his book again his sense of power had lost its asperity, and the spectacle of life seemed less like a witless dangling of limp dolls. He was well on in his second chapter now.

This lightness of mood was still on him when, returning one afternoon to Washington Square, full of projects for a long evening's work, he found his mother awaiting him with a strange face. He followed her into the drawing-room, and she explained that there had been a telephone message she didn't understand—something perfectly crazy about Paul—of course it was all a mistake. . .

Ralph's first thought was of an accident, and his heart contracted. "Did Laura telephone?"

Mrs. Marvell reassured him. "No, no; not Laura. It seemed to be a message from Mrs. Spragg: something about sending some one here to fetch him—a queer name like Heeny—to fetch him to a steamer on Saturday. I was to be sure to have his things packed . . . but of course it's all a misunderstanding. . ." She seated herself with an uncertain laugh, and looked up at Ralph as though entreating him to return the reassurance she had given him.

"Of course, of course," he echoed.

He made his mother repeat her statement; but the unforeseen always flurried her, and she was confused and inaccurate. She didn't actually know who had telephoned: the voice hadn't sounded like

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mrs. Spragg's. . . A woman's voice; yes —oh, not a lady's! And there was certainly something about a steamer . . . but he knew how the telephone bewildered her . . . and she was sure she was getting a little deaf. Hadn't he better call up the Malibran? Of course it was all a mistake—but . . . well, perhaps he *had* better go there himself. . .

She followed him into the hall, watching him with tender, anxious eyes. As he reached the door, a letter clinked in the box, and he saw his name on an ordinary looking business envelope. He turned the door-handle, paused again, and stooped to take out the letter. He read on one corner the address of the firm of lawyers who had represented Undine in the divorce proceedings and as he tore open the envelope his son's name started out at him.

Mrs. Marvell's cry broke the silence. "Ralph—Ralph—is it anything she's done?"

He stared. "Nothing—it's nothing. What's the day of the week?" he asked.

"Wednesday. Why, what—?" She suddenly seemed to understand. "It's not *that?* She's not going to take him away from us?"

Ralph dropped into a chair, crumpling the letter in his hand. He had been in a dream, poor fool—a dream about his child! He sat staring at the type-written phrases that spun themselves out before him. "My client's circumstances now happily permitting . . . being at last in a position to offer her son a home . . . long separation . . . a mother's feelings . . . every social and educational advantage" . . . and then, at the end, the poisoned dart that struck him speechless: "The courts having awarded her the sole custody . . ."

The sole custody! But that meant that Paul was hers, hers only, hers for always: that his father had no more claim on him than any casual stranger in the street! And he, Ralph Marvell, a sane man, young, able-bodied, in full possession of his wits, had assisted at the perpetration of this abominable wrong, had passively forfeited his right to the flesh of his flesh, the blood of his being! But it couldn't be—of course it couldn't be. The preposterousness of it proved that it wasn't true. There was a mistake somewhere, of course; a mistake his own lawyer would instantly rectify. If a hammer hadn't been drumming in his head he could have recalled the terms of the decree—but for the moment all the details of the agonizing episode seemed wrapped in a dense fog of uncertainty.

To escape his mother's silent anguish of interrogation he stood up and said: "I'll see Mr. Spragg—of course it's all a mistake." But as he spoke some sleeping memory stirred, and he knew it was not a mistake. In a flash he retravelled the hateful months during the divorce proceedings, remembering his incomprehensible lassitude, his acquiescence in his family's determination to ignore the whole episode, and his gradual lapse into the same state of abject apathy. He recalled all the old family catch-words, the full and elaborate vocabulary of evasion: "delicacy," "pride," "personal dignity," "preferring not to know about such things"; Mrs. Marvell's: "All I ask is that you won't mention the subject to your grandfather," Mr. Dagonet's: "Spare your mother, Ralph, whatever happens," and even Laura's terrified: "Of course, for Paul's sake, there must be no scandal."

For Paul's sake! And it was because, for Paul's sake, there must be no scandal, that he, Paul's father, had tamely abstained from defending his rights and contesting his wife's charges, and had thus handed the child over to her keeping!

As his cab whirled him up Fifth Avenue, Ralph's whole body throbbed with rage against the influences that had reduced him to such weakness. Then, gradually, he saw that the weakness was innate in him. He had been eloquent enough, in his free youth, against the conventions of his class; yet, when the moment came to show his contempt for them, they had mysteriously mastered him, deflecting his course like some hidden hereditary failing. As he looked back it seemed to him that even his great disaster had been conventionalized and sentimentalized by this inherited attitude: that the thoughts he had thought about it were only those of generations of Dagonets, and that there had been nothing real and his own in his life but the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

foolish passion he had been trying so hard to think out of existence.

Halfway to the Malibran he changed his direction, and drove to the house of the lawyer he had consulted at the time of his divorce. The lawyer had not yet come up town, and Ralph had a half hour of bitter meditation before the sound of a latch-key brought him to his feet. The visit did not last long. His host, after an affable greeting, listened without surprise to what he had to say, and when he had ended reminded him with somewhat ironic precision that, at the time of the divorce, he had asked for neither advice nor information—had simply declared that he wanted to "turn his back on the whole business" (Ralph recognized the phrase as one of his grandfather's), and, on hearing that in that case he had only to abstain from action, and was in no need of legal services, had gone away without further enquiries.

"You led me to infer you had your reasons—" the slighted counsellor concluded; and, in reply to Ralph's breathless question: "Why, you see, the case is closed, and I don't exactly know on what ground you can re-open it—unless, of course, you can bring evidence showing that the irregularity of the mother's life is such . . ."

"She's going to marry again," Ralph interposed.

"Indeed? Well, that in itself can hardly be described as irregular. In fact, in certain circumstances it might be construed as an advantage to the child."

"Then I'm powerless?"

"Why—unless there's an ulterior motive—through which pressure might be brought to bear."

"You mean that the first thing to do is to find out what she's up to?"

"Precisely. Of course, if it should prove to be a genuine case of maternal feeling, I won't conceal from you that the outlook's bad. At most, you could probably arrange to see the child at stated intervals."

To see the child at stated intervals! Ralph dimly wondered how a sane man could sit there, looking responsible and efficient, and talk such rubbish. . . As he got up to go the lawyer detained him to add: "Of course there's no immediate cause for alarm. It will take time to enforce the provision of the Dakota decree in New York, and till it's done your boy can't be taken from you. But there's sure to be a lot of nasty talk in the papers; and you're bound to lose in the end."

Ralph thanked him and left.

He sped northward again to the Malibran, where he learned that Mr. and Mrs. Spragg were at dinner. He sent his name down to the subterranean, and Mr. Spragg's stooping figure presently appeared between the limp portières of the "Adam" writing-room. He had grown older and heavier, as if illness instead of health had put more flesh on his bones, and there were greyish tints in the hollows of his sallow face.

"What's this about Paul?" Ralph exclaimed. "My mother's had a message we can't make out."

Mr. Spragg sat down, with the effect of immersing his spinal column in the depths of the armchair he selected. He crossed his legs, and swung one foot to and fro in its high wrinkled boot with elastic sides.

"Didn't you get a letter?" he asked.

"From my—from Undine's lawyers? Yes." Ralph held it out. "It's queer reading. She hasn't hitherto shown any particular desire to have Paul with her."

Mr. Spragg, adjusting his glasses, read the letter slowly, restored it to the envelope and handed it back. "My daughter has intimated that she wishes these gentlemen to act for her. I haven't received any additional instructions from her," he then said, with none of the curtness of tone that his stiff legal vocabulary implied.

"But the first communication I received was from you—at least from Mrs. Spragg."

Mr. Spragg drew his beard through his hand. "The ladies are apt to be a trifle hasty. I believe Mrs. Spragg had a letter yesterday instructing her to select a reliable escort for Paul; and I suppose she thought——"

"Oh, this is all too preposterous!" Ralph burst out, springing from his seat. "You don't for a moment imagine, do you—any of you—that I'm going to deliver up my son like a bale of goods in answer to any instructions in God's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

world?—Oh, yes, I know—I let him go—I abandoned my right to him . . . but I didn't know what I was doing. . . I was sick with grief and misery. My people were awfully broken up over the whole business, and I wanted to spare them. I wanted, above all, to spare my boy, when he grew up. If I'd contested the case you know what the result would have been. I let it go by default—I made no conditions—all I wanted was to keep Paul, and never to let him hear a word against his mother!"

Mr. Spragg received this passionate appeal in a silence that implied not so much disdain or indifference, as the total inability to deal verbally with emotional crises. At length he said, a faint unsteadiness in his usually calm tones: "I presume at the time it was optional with you to demand Paul's custody."

"Oh, yes—it was optional," Ralph sneered.

Mr. Spragg looked at him compassionately. "I'm sorry you didn't do it," he said.

XXXIII

The upshot of Ralph's visit was that Mr. Spragg, after considerable deliberation, agreed, pending farther negotiations between the opposing lawyers, to undertake that no attempt should be made to remove Paul from his father's custody. Nevertheless, he professed to think it quite natural that Undine, on the point of making a marriage which would put it in her power to give her child a suitable home, should seize the opportunity to assert her claim on him. It was more disconcerting to Ralph to learn that Mrs. Spragg, for once departing from her attitude of passive abstention, had eagerly abetted her daughter's move; he had somehow felt that Undine's desertion of the child had established a kind of mute understanding between himself and Mrs. Spragg.

"I thought Mrs. Spragg at least would know there's no earthly use trying to take Paul from me," he said with a desperate awkwardness of entreaty; and Mr. Spragg startled him by replying: "I presume his grandma thinks he'll belong to her more if we keep him in the family."

Ralph, abruptly awakened from his dream of recovered peace, found himself confronted on every side by indifference or hostility: it was as though the June fields in which his boy was playing had suddenly opened to engulph him. Mrs. Marvell's fears and tremors were almost harder to bear than the Spraggs' antagonism; and for the next few days Ralph wandered about miserably, dreading some fresh communication from Undine's lawyers, yet racked by the strain of hearing nothing more from them. Mr. Spragg had agreed to cable his daughter, asking her to await a letter before enforcing her demands; but on the fourth day after Ralph's visit to the Malibran a telephone message summoned him to his father-in-law's office.

Half an hour later their talk was over and he stood once more on the landing outside Mr. Spragg's door. Undine's answer had come and Paul's fate was sealed. His mother refused to give him up, refused to await the arrival of her lawyer's letter, and reiterated, in more peremptory language, her demand that the child, in Mrs. Heeny's care, should be despatched immediately to Paris.

Mr. Spragg, in face of Ralph's entreaties, remained pacific but remote. It was clear that, though he had no wish to quarrel with Ralph, he saw no reason for resisting Undine. "I guess she's got the law on her side," he said; and in response to Ralph's passionate remonstrances he added fatalistically: "I presume you'll have to leave the matter to my daughter."

Ralph had gone to the office resolved to control his temper and hold himself alert for any shred of information he might glean; but it soon became clear that Mr. Spragg knew as little as himself of Undine's projects, or of the stage her plans had reached. All she had apparently vouchsafed her parent was the statement that she intended to re-marry, and the command to send Paul over; and Ralph reflected that his own betrothal to her had probably been announced to Mr. Spragg in the same oracular fashion.

The thought brought with it an overwhelming sense of the past. One by one the details of that incredible moment revived, and he felt in his veins the glow of rapture with which he had first ap-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

proached the dingy threshold he was now leaving. There came back to him with peculiar vividness the memory of his rushing up to Mr. Spragg's office to consult him about a necklace for Undine. Ralph recalled the incident because his eager appeal for advice had been received by Mr. Spragg with the very phrase he had just used: "I presume you'll have to leave the matter to my daughter."

Ralph saw him slouching in his revolving chair, swung sideways from the untidy desk, his legs stretched out, his hands in his pockets, his jaws engaged on the phantom toothpick; and, in a corner of the office, the business-like figure of a middle-sized red-faced young man who seemed to have been interrupted in the act of saying something disagreeable.

"Why, it must have been then that I first saw Moffatt," Ralph reflected; and the thought suggested the memory of other, subsequent meetings in the same building, and of frequent ascents to Moffatt's office during the ardent weeks of their mysterious and remunerative "deal."

Ralph wondered if Moffatt's office was still in the Ararat; and on the way out he paused before the black tablet affixed to the marble panelling of the vestibule and sought and found the name in its familiar place.

The next moment his whole mind was again absorbed in his own cares. Now that he had learned the imminence of Paul's danger, and futility of pleading for delay, a thousand fantastic projects were contending in his head. To get the boy away—that seemed the first thing to do: to put him out of reach, and then invoke the law, get the case re-opened, and carry the fight from court to court till his rights should be recognized. It would cost a lot of money—well, the money would have to be found. The first step was to secure the boy's temporary safety; after that, the question of ways and means would have to be considered. . . Had there ever been a time, Ralph wondered, when that question hadn't been at the root of all the others?

He had promised to report the result of his visit to Clare Van Degen, and half an hour later he was in her drawing-room. It was the first time he had entered it since his divorce; but Van Degen was tarpon-fishing in California—and besides, he had to see Clare. His one relief was in talking to her, in feverishly turning over with her every possibility of delay and obstruction; and he was surprised at the intelligence and energy she brought to the discussion of these questions. It was as if she had never before felt strongly enough about anything to put her heart or her brains into it; but now everything in her was at work for him.

She listened intently to what he told her; then she said at once: "You tell me it will cost a great deal; but why take it to the courts at all? Why not give the money to Undine instead of to your lawyers?"

Ralph gave her a surprised glance, and she continued: "Why do you suppose she's suddenly made up her mind she must have Paul?"

He shrugged impatiently. "That's comprehensible enough to any one who knows her. She wants him because he'll give her the appearance of respectability. His bodily presence will prove, as no mere assertions can, that all the rights are on her side and the 'wrongs' on mine."

Clare considered. "Yes; that's the obvious answer. But shall I tell you what I think, my dear? You and I are both completely out-of-date. I don't believe Undine cares a straw for 'the appearance of respectability.' What she wants is the money for her annulment."

Ralph looked at her in wonder. "Don't you see?" she hurried on. "It's her only hope—her last chance. She's much too clever to burden herself with the child merely to annoy you. What she wants is to make you buy him back from her." She stood up and came to him with outstretched hands. "Perhaps I can be of use at last!"

"You?" He summoned up a haggard smile. "As if you weren't always—letting me load you with my beastly bothers!"

"Oh, if only I've hit on the way out of this one! Then there wouldn't be any others left!" Her eyes followed him intently as he turned away and stood staring out at the long sultry prospect of Fifth Avenue. As he stood there, turning over her conjecture, its probability became more and more apparent. It put into logical relation all the incoherences of Undine's recent conduct, completed

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and defined her anew as if a sharp line had been drawn about her fading image.

"If it's that, I shall soon know," he said, turning back into the room. His course had instantly become plain. He had only to resist and Undine would have to show her hand. Simultaneously with this thought there sprang up in his mind the remembrance of the autumn afternoon in Paris when, on the eve of sailing, he had come home and found her, among her half-packed finery, desperately bewailing her coming motherhood.

Clare's touch was on his arm. "If I'm right—you *will* let me help?"

He laid his hand on hers without speaking, and she went on:

"It will take a lot of money: all these law-suits do. Besides, she'd be ashamed to sell him cheap. You must be ready to give her anything she wants. And I've got a lot saved up—money of my own, I mean. . ."

"Your own?" He looked at her tenderly and curiously, noting the rare blush under her brown skin.

"My very own. Why shouldn't you believe me? I've been hoarding up my scrap of an income for years, thinking that some day I'd find I couldn't stand this any longer. . ." Her gesture embraced their sumptuous setting. "But now I know I shall never budge. There are the children; and besides, things are easier for me since—" she paused embarrassed.

"Yes, yes; I know." He felt like completing her phrase: "Since my wife has furnished you with the means of putting pressure on your husband"—but he simply repeated: "I know."

"And you *will* let me help?"

"Oh, we must get at the facts first." He caught her hands in his, glowing with energy. "As you say, when Paul's safe there won't be another bother left!"

(To be continued.)

THE HILL-BORN

By Maxwell Struthers Burt

You who are born of the hills,
Hill-bred, lover of hills,
Though the world may not treat you aright,
Though your soul be aweary with ills,
This you will know above other men
In the hills you will find your peace again.

You who were nursed on the heights,
Hill-bred, lover of skies,
Though your love and your hope and your heart,
Though your trust be hurt till it dies,
This you will know above other men
In the hills you will find your faith again.

You who are brave from the winds,
Hill-bred, lover of winds,
Though the God whom you knew seems dim,
Seems lost in a mist that blinds,
This you will know above other men,
In the hills you will find your God again.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE POINT OF VIEW

IN the April number of SCRIBNER'S, under "The Point of View," the article concerning West Point appeals to me as somewhat misleading. In fact, I believe the general public is under a decidedly wrong impression regarding the examinations for entrance to West Point and Annapolis. That "the mental requirements for admission are perfectly simple and perfectly elementary," and that "it is known that they have been kept perfectly elementary from the beginning in order to comply with the demand that the regions in which the available schooling was but elementary should have a fair chance with the regions in which it was further advanced," are opinions held by the uninitiated everywhere.

West Point and Annapolis

When I was about sixteen years of age, I was promised an appointment to the Naval Academy. From what information I gathered relative to the entrance examinations, I felt supremely confident of my ability to pass them easily. To-day hundreds of boys acquire the same kind of information and are possessed of the same idea. Then they fail. But luckily for me, a change in party control in my district deprived me of the appointment. Experience as a teacher has convinced me that I should have failed miserably, despite the fact that I had gone through a reputable high-school, and that with a grade each year high enough to relieve me of all examinations excepting one.

Inasmuch as the entrance examinations to both West Point and Annapolis are in progress as I write, the topic is timely, and the blame for the many failures should be placed where it belongs—on the secondary schools of the country, on the misleading information given out relative to the examinations, and on the severity of the examinations. Let me quote a few questions from recent examinations. Arithmetic: "If 112 lbs. of copper be drawn into 1 mile of wire, find the area of the cross section, the specific gravity of copper being 8.96." "A passenger train running 45 miles per hour overtakes a freight train 1½ times as long, running 27 miles per hour, and passes it in 25 seconds. How long would the passenger train take to pass a platform 165 yards long?" "Forty pounds Troy of standard gold, containing $\frac{1}{12}$ alloy, are minted into 1,869 sovereigns. Find the number of grains of pure gold in a sovereign; and also the value of a light-weight sovereign that contains one grain less of pure gold than it should, standard gold being worth £3, 17 sh., 9 d. per Troy ounce." These questions counted one-half of one whole question out of five or six questions to the entire examination. Even the mechanical work in these examinations generally consists of intricate problems that seldom yield a simple answer.

Algebra: "If a carriage wheel 14⅔ ft. in circumference takes one second longer to revolve, the rate of the carriage will be reduced 2⅔ miles per hour. Find the original rate of the carriage." "If one cu. in. aluminum weighs .092 lb., and one of copper weighs .31 lb., find the percentage of composition by weight of a mixture of the two weighing .276 lb. to the cubic inch." "Solve $y^2+2xy-20y+9x^2-92x+244=0$ for y; and show that y will have real values only when the value of x lies between 3 and 6. For what values of x will the equation be a perfect square?"

World's history (this subject was eliminated this year as a requirement for Annapolis): "Give the principal events in the history of Egypt. Name the characters that played the leading parts in the history of Greece from 1100 B. C. to 146 B. C. What did each do? Give a brief outline of the main events in the history of the Roman Republic." This was the first question in an examination containing four given in 1906.

Now you will note that the questions are really elementary; but are they perfectly simple? Let him who thinks so sit down and work them out; and by the time he has finished he will very likely take his hat off to the boys that have passed them with a good mark. And let him remember that he hasn't all the time he wants to work them

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out—for Annapolis, three hours are given for each of the mathematics subjects, and two for history; for West Point, four hours are given for each of the mathematics subjects, but their work is generally more advanced.

Then there is another thing to keep in mind. To enter West Point or Annapolis a boy has to make a passing grade in *every* subject. He cannot enter with one or two or three conditions, as he can enter college. Neither has he the privilege of re-examination in the subjects in which he has failed. He has one trial to make good, and then he must make *absolutely good*.

What They Give and Expect

I AM not writing this to criticise the authorities at either institution. On the contrary, I believe that the United States Government has a right to expect a little more from the boys whom it educates, and to whom at the same time it pays a salary equal to that earned by the average college graduate the first year out of college. And further than this, what college graduate has a splendid life position, with his old age cared for, guaranteed him immediately after graduating, as the West Point or the Annapolis boy has? For what is given by the government something on the part of the aspiring boy must be given in return—and that something is a little-above-the-average ability, and the most earnest effort, and even sacrifice, in preparing to enter the academy.

Very few boys are able to enter either institution without making special preparation. By special preparation, I mean that given by some reputable school that makes a specialty of preparing boys for the academies. The necessity for this appears in several ways. In geography, history, and grammar, subjects essentially very easy, the boy has very likely had his training scattered over several years in grammar school and four years in high school. Thus he forgets a vast amount of essential details—and it is a question whether he ever got them with sufficient thoroughness. In all these subjects a boy needs review and instruction under a guiding hand familiar with the requirements. In geometry especially the boy's public-school training is totally inadequate. I have yet to learn of a secondary school's teaching a boy to find the side of a pentadecagon, pentagon, or dodecagon inscribed in a circle of radius r. Yet in nearly every examination for West Point or Annapolis it is required that the candidate compute the side and area of four or five regular polygons. Especially for Annapolis, the geometry examination consists almost entirely of original work, problem work that is fairly easy, but very unusual. I believe it to be the most sensible kind of geometry—the kind that every school ought to teach, but does not. And in all the other mathematics subjects the elementary school training in this country lacks that thoroughness and wide range that are necessary to the candidate's equipment. The course in the high-school or academy usually touches the high places only, and the student knows *only the problems and methods given in the one text-book assigned to him*. He learns those mechanically, or by heart, without really understanding the subject as a whole. Our teachers, in their daily work and in their examinations, fail to see the advantage in giving students questions taken from other books than those used in the classroom. Thus they neglect the only sure way to find out whether the student knows the subject or only the book.

When one considers this last-mentioned fact, and then the fact that the candidate for Annapolis or West Point has to pass examinations made from this book and that book, from here and there and everywhere, he will understand more clearly why so many fail. To pass, a boy must have in the various subjects a knowledge above the average; or he must have ability to think and to reason clearly and quickly, far above that possessed by the average boy.

There is a certain distinction that attaches to the cadet at West Point and the midshipman at Annapolis that is earned, for I believe that the boys that pass the entrance examinations and have the ability to pursue the course inside to a successful conclusion have accomplished more than the majority of our college men accomplish: they have passed their entrance requirements and have completed their four years' work without a failure in any subject. It is not that the majority of college men could not do that, but it is a fact that they do not do it.

In conclusion, let me say that what is needed is an awakening among the candidates for West Point and Annapolis as to the actual requirements, and then a more de-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

termined effort on their part to acquire the training necessary to enter the academies. We shall overlook entirely what an improved public-school system might do for them. They are offered an exceptional opportunity for an honorable career, and why should not they make the same sacrifices, if necessary, to enter the government schools as the same class of boys do to go through college? Many of them do, and they are the ones that succeed.

Imaginative Travelling

THERE has been a story told of a certain artist who, finding himself unable to go away one summer for any sort of change, bought a French Baedeker of New York, and proceeded to "see" his native town from a Frenchman's point of view. The incident, vouched for as authentic, is certainly suggestive. The average American, fleeing to Europe, and often knowing less of his own country than of Egypt or India, has never been able to repel successfully the attack of the foreigner who inwardly attributes the small account which the American tourist appears to make of America as a place of travel to a form of colonialism, a confession of provinciality. But the foreigner is by no means always right. The American tourist goes to Europe primarily because Europe means so great a change; and travelling in his own country does not mean a change in any radical sense, but only a repetition of familiar impressions. A native of almost any European country can, within two or three hours, plunge his brain into the refreshing currents of a new environment, a different speech, a moving panorama of faces that have different features and a different expression. The American must travel far to change the physiognomy of his surroundings. But now scientists—explaining a fact which people have always acted on without knowing that they knew it—tell us that the brain wearies and sickens, becomes actually attacked by a sort of poison of fatigue, if it is forced for too long at a time into contact with the same things. No American tourist in Europe need therefore assume henceforth the apologetic attitude. Science has elucidated him to himself, and what was once a blind instinct has been recognized as a dignified necessity. It is a psychological "case."

But even while this is so, it is borne in upon us from various directions that the American tourist might very well get more fresh food, more change, for his brain without leaving his own latitude than he has hitherto been conscious of. There are signs that we are beginning slowly to awaken to the truth that the North American Continent holds elements of interest as deep and as full of elusive suggestiveness as the most imaginative traveller could desire. Our historic sense, which for so long was satisfied with Puritan and Cavalier, and made pathetically so much of colonial fireplaces and seventeenth-century pewter mugs, fastens on a vaster field indeed when it follows the ethnological and archæological research of recent years. A well-known composer has been pointing out the eagerness with which many of the more serious American song-writers are turning for inspiration to the vanishing records of native Indian music. This musical interest has been greatly affected by the newer researches of the ethnologist, did the composers only know it. So long as the American Indian was conceived of as unrelated to any other race—a conviction to which many ethnologists still obstinately, almost angrily, cling—so long was he without appreciable appeal to the historic imagination. Conceive of him as having affiliations, however obscure and unverified, with remote, unknown, prehistoric civilizations, and his value changes. Let the American traveller follow the Indian traces and relics from Mexico to Canada, from the Yumas to the Hurons, with his mind set in this direction, and he can become steeped, for the time, in a change of ideas complete enough to cure any case of brain-fag.

We have largely exploited the *habitant* of the Canadian woods and the Creole of New Orleans, but innumerable foot-tracks of a great thwarted Latin civilization are imprinted half-way across and into the heart of the Continent, and have never yet been sympathetically traced. Why not, laying aside a certain national *hauteur*, search out the less visible streams that lie behind our life, and have gone to make it? There is nothing, for a change, like seeing what the other fellow's idea was about it all.

Once have the intuition for the unbeaten track and there are reservoirs of refreshment for tired brains in all the corners of the world.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE FIELD OF ART

Child with Top.

In the art collection of Mr. John G. Johnson, Philadelphia, Pa.

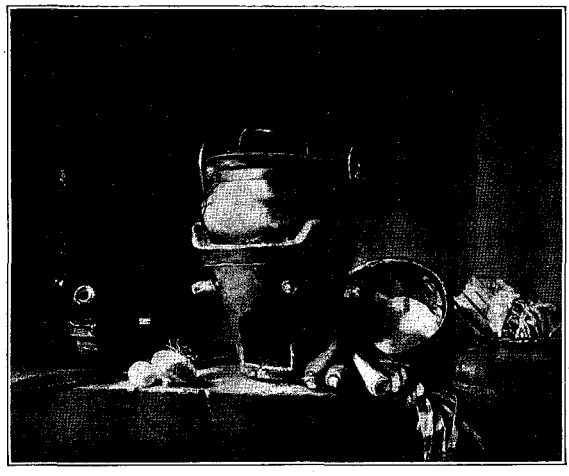
CHARDIN

"ART," said Chardin, "is an island of which I have but skirted the coast-line." Why, then, has he counted so many ardent admirers, so many extravagant friends? "Anticipation of the Impressionists." Yes, if you like the phrase; but one does not always love the anticipators. "Distinction of the highest and finest order in rendering mediocrity." Yes, but not all of us love the George Moores and Arnold Bennetts who, in our own day, have been crowned for their little successes in a parallel literary effort. Moreover, Chardin is no typical cosmopolitan. Though Frederick the Great bought his work for the Bagatelle, and the King of Sweden was another purchaser, though to-day one finds ten canvases of this the greatest of little masters in the collection of a Philadelphia lawyer, the painter himself did no such travelling as his paintings; his voyage, like de Maistre's, was around his own chamber.

Jean-Baptiste-Simeon Chardin was a painter of the eighteenth century—but he was neither courtier, Anglomaniac, nor revolutionary. The son of the king's billiard-table maker, he was elected to the Royal Academy in 1728 as "a painter of animals and fruits." One knows from this restrained class of subjects, later enlarged, that he was a *petit bourgeois;* though his attainment of reality without sordidness, his exquisiteness in the handling of accessories, might suggest to the more precious kind of psychologist that he was an aristocrat, rather—wilfully selecting such homely themes as had for him an initial strangeness bordering upon romance itself. Yet this would be a superficial inference; for it is obvious, not only that the painter of the "Morning Toilette" cherishes, but also that he has long lived with, his subjects. Chateaubriand sometimes wore a red bandanna handkerchief in privacy. Tolstoi assumed cobbler's costume. Loti at Rochefort sleeps

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in a bedroom modelled on Breton peasant architecture, has a checked cotton bedspread, wears wooden shoes. All of this is theatricality—theatricality that is flawlessly reflected in the writings of these three notables. But there is no melodrama in the art of Chardin. He left all that to the other men of his century: to Rousseau, writer and foundling-home moralist; to Boucher and Fragonard and Greuze, gallants and sentimentalists in paint. Greuze it was who counselled: "If you can't be true, be piquant." Chardin alone realized (to paraphrase W. M. Hunt) that beauty is that little something which, filling the whole world, may be glimpsed even in a leg of mutton; realized (before Rodin) that there is little or nothing ugly in art but that which is without character—without exterior or interior truth; realized, finally, what some followers of Rodin do not, that of a beautiful and an ugly conception, both of them honest, the beautiful is the worthier achievement.



Still Life.
In the art collection of Mr. John G. Johnson, Philadelphia, Pa.

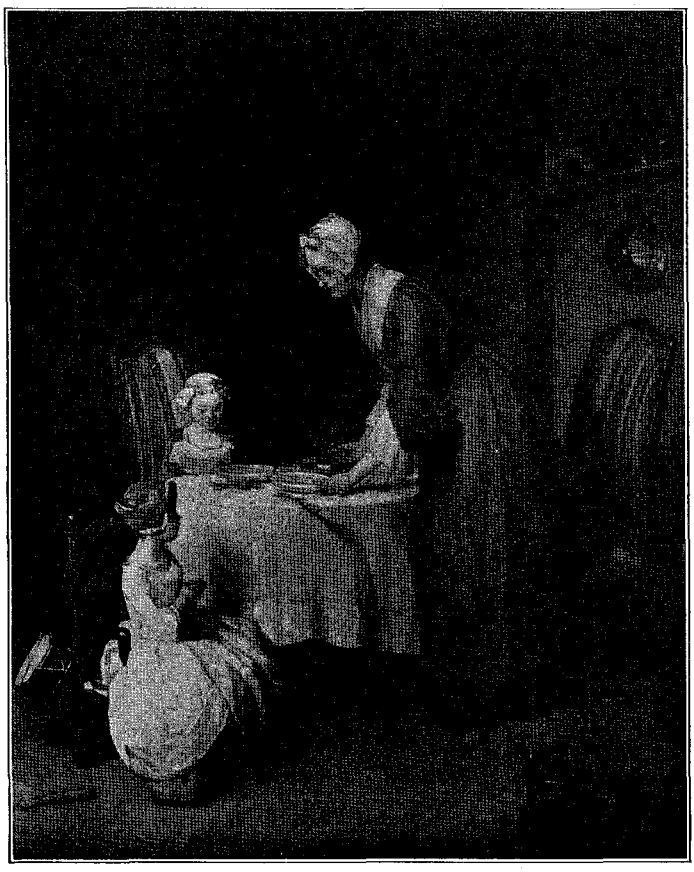
A little bourgeois of the St. Sulpice quarter of Paris—a quiet quarter relatively unchanged since the eighteenth century—we have no proof that he ever left the environs of his birthplace. Chardin made *home* the subject of his art—the French home. That is one reason why he is so national a painter. A Parisian born, he is, in his painting, less obviously Parisian than many a provincial. Watteau, in the seventeenth century, shared the life of comedians, and portrayed actors and mountebanks—you know his Gilles; in the nineteenth century, Degas is by no means the first great man to hold the mirror up to foot-lights. But Chardin was Frenchman before he was Parisian; and painted home. Nor did he make this home a theatre, as even his imitators did not fail to do.

In America, the "man in the street" has it dinned into his ears that the French language affords no word for "home." Small wonder if he concludes that France, which surely shaped its language, contains no homes. This delusion is fortified by the circumstances that the French stage of to-day treats of little but home-breaking, and that few foreigners in France are granted the opportunity to see for themselves the modest graciousness of family life. As a matter of fact, the Frenchman has, if no direct word for home, several excellent phrases to choose from when he wishes to express its idea. Is he at home? Then he is *chez lui*. (Home is so much a part of him that one requires the personal pronoun to name it!) Does he wish to conjure up an image of his habitation? He will then use one of the most beautiful words in his language, the word *foyer*, which the dictionary equivalent, "hearth," scarcely suffices to translate. For the word "hearth" evokes only a picture of several square feet before the fireplace—warm or cold as chance will have it. *Foyer* connotes not only the hearth-stone, but the chairs drawn up about it; in those chairs the wife and children, without whose presence home is an echoing mockery.

Chardin, the French eighteenth-century painter, not only did his work at home and found his models there, but gave the central plane to its real centre, the wife. He paints fish with fervor, onions with gusto, monkeys with humor; he also does his own portrait in pastel, the portrait of a man resigned to the ravages of years, serene in spite of sufferings. The pamphlets of his own age charge Chardin with indolence, and certainly the restricted subject-matter of the painter strongly suggests, if not quite that, at least a certain deficiency in adventurousness, if

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not in curiosity itself. The painter seems to have taken a deeper interest in repeating an old performance, with improvements in minute detail, than in attacking new problems, addressing untried themes. Most men, butchers or statesmen or cabmen or financiers, are called out of doors by their occupations; their centre of activity lies outside the family circle. They return to their circle (whether as members or as almost strangers), but they *return*. Whereas the wife (in Chardin's bourgeois milieu of the eighteenth century) *remains:* and Chardin too remains, and paints her and all her home-keeping paraphernalia.



La Bénédicité.
Property of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Not that Chardin imported woman into French painting. He found her already enthroned there, as in the salon itself; for (to quote Gaston Maugras) the novels, engravings, letters, furniture, paintings, sculptures of the Regency, all repeat a drama of voluptuousness, in which woman plays the leading rôle; her stage, drawing-room or bosquet. Chardin shifts the scene from salon to kitchen, and his woman is no masquerading shepherdess or aspiring Marianne, but Mme. Chardin.

In the French family of the middle class, such as our painter's, the wife is not only the natural centre; she is the dominant figure. She is not only the woman, that is, the producer of men—she is also the director of her own man. And this has been essentially true even where the man has stayed at home, as do concierges, hôtelliers, and small shopkeepers. All who travel know how true this is in Latin countries. The man smokes by the fireplace, or behind the counter; the goodwife orders him here and there, and is the ruling member of the little partnership, which she makes really profitable. Who wastes time discussing the price of his room

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with the French landlady's amiable, inefficient spouse?

Chardin, then, paints the housewife at her tasks—scrubbing the copper till it shines as only a good housekeeper (or a Chardin) can make it; peeling potatoes for dinner; waiting, before she serves the soup, until her child has finished saying the simple little blessing. Chardin's work is itself a blessing. In an age when the air was thick with intrigue and febrile with decay he paints the French family and its persistently wholesome surroundings, that have defied generations of decadence to do their worst. It is a delusion to call him a "mere" painter of still life: he is the master whose *nature morte* is a resurrection. There is more genuine interest, more suggestion of the realities, in an uncooked breakfast, painted by Chardin, than in a melodrama staged by a brother painter.

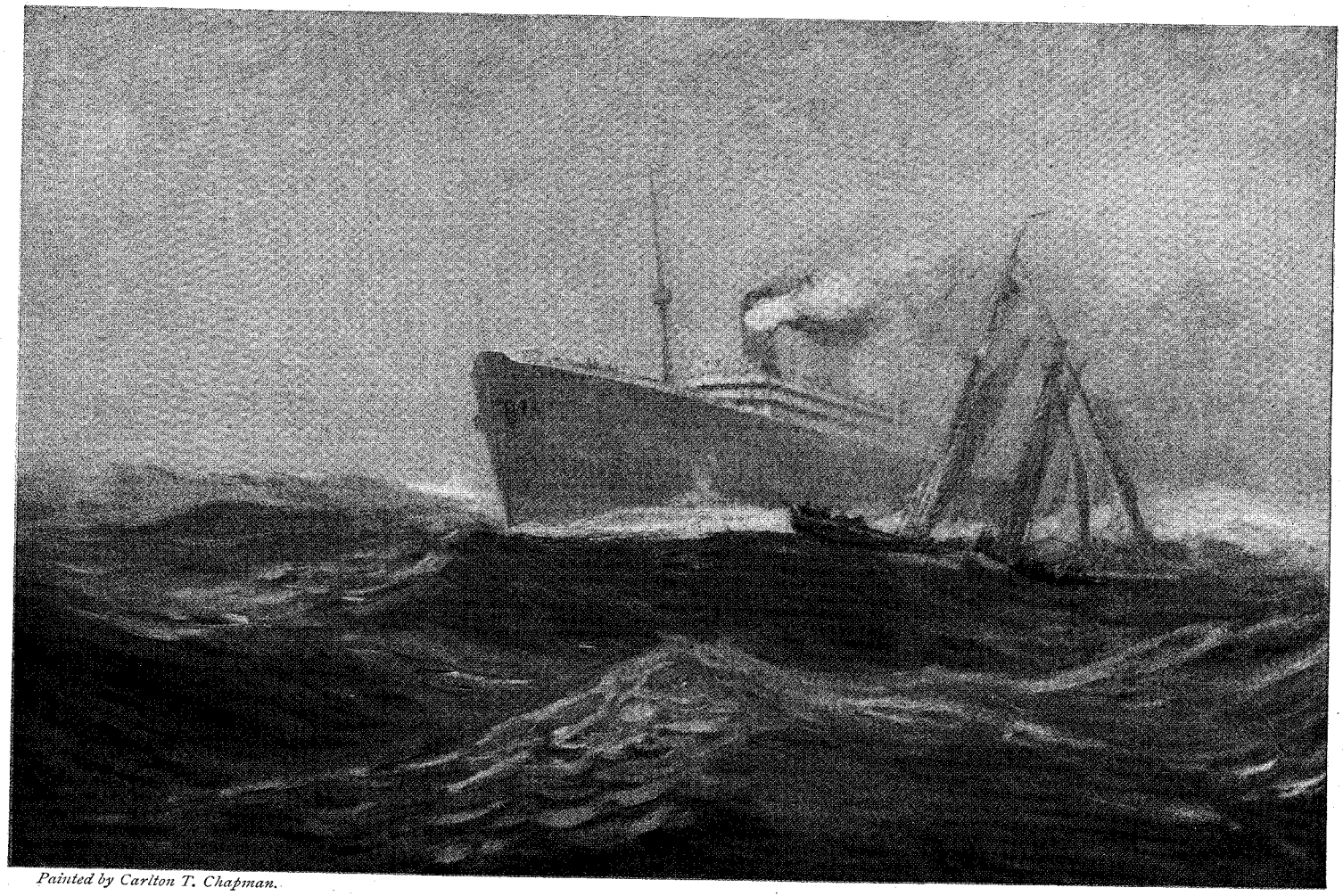
Child with Cage.
In the art collection of Mr. John G. Johnson, Philadelphia, Pa.

That Chardin is no one's "pupil" is self-evident. To what extent he echoes the Dutch *genre* painters, and thus links Vermeer of Delft and Tarbell of Boston, U. S. A., is a subject for the professional art critic, along with the painter's mastery of a modest palette, the cool refreshment of his backgrounds, the magic of his whites that are not whites, his discriminating realism. In 1880 a British critic could write, "Chardin is not known in England"; in the painter's lifetime Hogarth falsely boasted that "France hath not produced one remarkably good colorist"—but meantime Diderot waxed enthusiastic over his peaches, "that invite the hand"; while his scenes from domestic life, in which figures as well as accessories play their due part, were favorite subjects of contemporary engravers—Laurent Cars, Lepicié, Surugue, Le Bas. Yet Chardin is not the most "literary" painter of his teeming century, any more than he is the most modish. He reports what he sees at hand, but does not go out of his way to preach sermons or tell stories. Neither is he a painter with a social thesis or democratic pretensions like Millet. All this militates against one kind of popularity, for the public applauds bumptiousness; but there are some of us who think that, in painting at least, the reporter who loves his theme is preferable to orator or preacher or tale-bearer. To such as hold this view, Chardin's low-pitched appeal is very strong. Certainly it is always a gentle magic: never insistent, never *raccrocheuse*. Chardin is not the painter to pluck you by the sleeve; his calm masterpieces, hung in a shop window, would draw no crowd. He did not, in his own lifetime, draw crowds—only the family.

And in the family we still enjoy him—pastels and all. His canvases, some of them, hang in the Louvre. They would as appropriately hang in your living-room—and, though they no longer can be had for five and eight dollars apiece (prices recorded by the Goncourts), perhaps you can afford one of the engravings that were multiplied in his own day and issued at a couple of francs apiece, engravings that have hung on the walls of bourgeois households, for all the world like those they reflected. The obvious detraction is that Chardin lacked imagination, just as he lacked the business instinct and the spirit of adventure. Yet, however local this artist is in types or settings or spirit, he is never a foreigner, whether we know him through the medium of pigment or through black and white. He demands no interpreter, like some of our contemporaries, who cry to heaven, but cry confusedly; he speaks a language understood. Chardin's career was far from romantic, though he married twice; we must look to him for uprightness in all the relations of life, including his métier, rather than for showiness of deed or word. Not a heroic painter, as painter, and long undervalued (as he undervalues himself); merely a painter of the undistinguished persons and minor incidents that go to make life tolerable.

WARREN BARTON BLAKE.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Painted by Carlton T. Chapman.

ON THE GRAND BANKS.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED